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And Others

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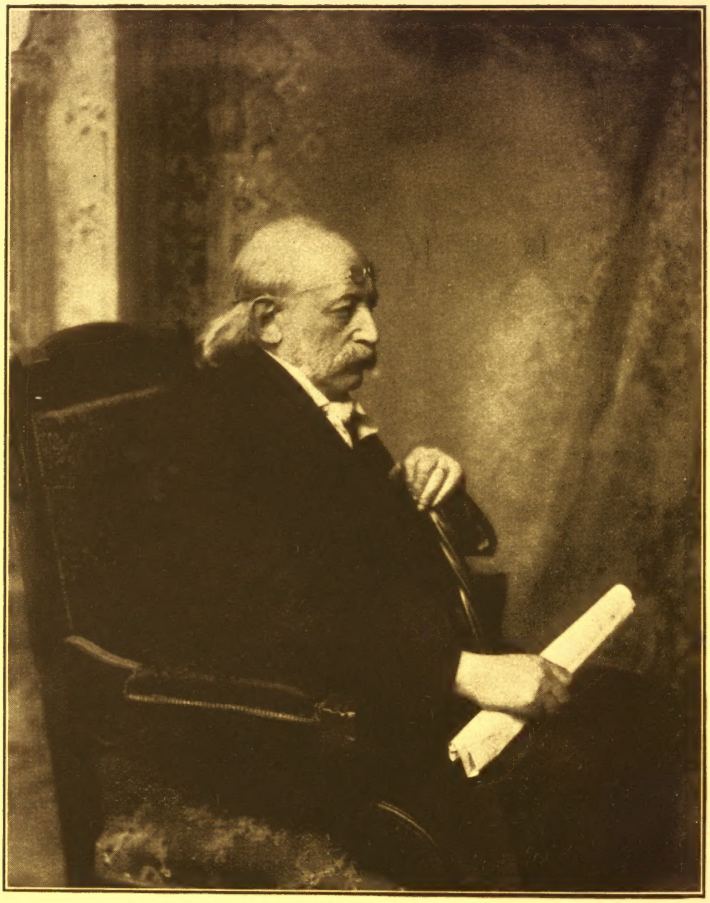

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BY

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AUTHOR OF THE REFORM MOVEMENT IN JUDAISM, ETC.

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DEDICATED

TO

THE MEMORY OF JUDAISM'S MASTER BUILDER

ISAAC MAYER WISE

ON THE OCCASION OF THE CENTENARY OF HIS BIRTH

PREFACE

The first two decades of the nineteenth century witnessed the birth of the men who became the great pioneer leaders of the progressive movement in Judaism popularly known as Reform Judaism. The centenaries of these men have been appropriately celebrated as they occurred one after the other. The present year 1919 marks the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of the man who though the last born of the celebrated group who gave shape to this movement became the best known of them all, particularly on the American continent. The centenary will be observed throughout the length and breadth of the United States. In the nature of the case these celebrations will be of a more or less passing character. The desire to mark the occasion by a more permanent memorial has induced me to publish this volume in memory of my great teacher, friend and colleague.

The essays included in the volume deal with the themes to which Dr. Wise's blessed activity of over half a century was chiefly devoted, namely, Reform Judaism and Americanism. A score of years lacking one has elapsed since the great rabbi joined the immortals. During these nineteen years the principles of Reform Judaism which he taught so constantly and championed so valiantly have been assailed as bitterly as in the birth years of the movement. This centenary season can therefore be em-

ployed to no better purpose than to publish forth the foundations of belief and interpretation whereon the famous leaders, Isaac M. Wise and his contemporaries erected the structure of liberal Judaism. Such is the purpose of the four centenary papers and the essay on the principles and achievements of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

The closing papers in this volume, with one exception, the last, center about the general theme Americanism. They consist of addresses delivered on notable occasions. The great role which the United States is now playing as a leader in the movement for world freedom brings into strong relief the underlying principles on which the republic rests. Among these underlying principles none is of greater moment than religious freedom. Because of this religious freedom the progressive movement in Judaism found its real field for development in the United States. These essays are therefore chapters in the story of Judaism's development under freedom and notably in this country. Isaac Mayer Wise was the embodiment of what reform Judaism and Americanism represent.

DAVID PHILIPSON.

Cincinnati, March, 1919.

CONTENTS

Isaac Mayer Wise 1819-1919 11
Samuel Holdheim 1806-1906 63
Abraham Geiger 1810-1910 99
Max Lilienthal 1815-1915 149
The Principles and Achievements of the Central Conference of American Rabbis 1889-1913 191
"Like Priest, Like People" (Conference Sermon) 229
"We Can Prevail" 247
Israel, the International People 263
The Debt and Duty of the Jews to the United States 281
America's Entrance Into the War 301
Are the Germans the Chosen People? 305

ISAAC MAYER WISE

1819-1919

THE reform movement in Judaism has flourished in the United States as in no other country. Germany was the land of its birth, but the United States has been the sphere of its development and progress. When Israel Jacobson dedicated the first reform Synagogue in 1810, an enthusiastic writer of the time hailed this event as the Festival of the Jewish Reformation. Although this designation was bombastic and unjustified, still that dedication marks the beginning of reform as a practical achievement in Jewry. But religious reform was only one aspect of the new life upon which the Jews were entering. It was the religious counterpart of the movements for the political and educational emancipation of the Jews. Political emancipation transformed the Ghetto Jew into a citizen of a fatherland, educational emancipation changed the *cheder*-Jew into a man of modern culture, religious emancipation transmuted the *schulchan arukh* Jew into the reformer for whom Judaism spelt universalism and not Orientalism, prophetism and not rabbinism, world-wide citizenship and not Palestinianism. Religious reform then was not an isolated phenomenon. Had not the French Revolution sounded the tocsin of freedom for the Jews of Western Europe, had not the modern spirit working through Mendelssohn and his school made the Jews

of Germany familiar with the intellectual output of the Kants, the Lessings, the Schillers, and the Goethes, there would have been no movement for religious reform; just as Ghettoism, *chederism* and rabbinism form the three-fold product of mediaevalism, so do political freedom, modern education and religious reform constitute the triple effect of the modern spirit which began to breathe upon the world in the latter half of the eighteenth century.

The rabbis of the old school who put the ban upon Mendelssohn's German translation of the Pentateuch, who excommunicated Wessely because of his efforts to introduce secular education among his co-religionists, and who frowned upon the strivings for civil emancipation were thoroughly consistent; they recognized that the acquisition of knowledge other than that imparted in the Hebrew schools and the participation of the Jews in the political life of the world meant the death blow to rabbinic-halakhic Judaism. They scented the danger and tried to avert it by every means in their power; but all in vain. The old order which they represented was passing. Jew and Judaism were entering upon a new stage. Judaism had to adapt itself to the new life and the new surroundings if it was to continue to mean something for the Jew. Thousands had turned from it or grown indifferent because the religion in its rabbinic interpretation had ceased to appeal to and satisfy the larger outlook which freedom had brought. There was an undeniable conflict between Judaism and life. The recognition of this conflict gave rise to the reform movement. The needs of the

time became imperative with the leaders whose eyes were open to the signs of the times. It was claimed and proven that there had always been freedom of thought in Judaism. Geiger and others with him framed and defended the thesis of development in Judaism.

What a seething time those early years of the reform movement were! What an era of storm and stress! Life was pressing on all sides. Institutions, practices, ceremonies and laws considered sacred for centuries were being disregarded because the life of the world which the Jews were leading made their observance impossible; if Judaism meant only these things then surely it was passing and would soon be no more; but great thinkers and rabbis like Geiger, Holdheim, Einhorn, Samuel Hirsch, the Adlers, Philippson, Stein and others showed that the faith in its essence was a great deal more; they accentuated the eternal, spiritual, prophetic, universalistic and messianic aspect as the true Judaism which in different ages and lands assumed varying aspects, and now that entirely new conditions confronted them the faith had to be interpreted accordingly. I have not the space here to discuss the philosophy and theology of the reform movement nor its history. Sufficient to say that it has a philosophy despite the claim of its opponents that it is merely a matter of convenience, sufficient to indicate that it has a theology despite the remark of the caustic critic who said that when a Jewish peddler ate a ham sandwich reform Judaism was born, as though mere convenience and the disregard for some traditional customs constituted the whole of

the reform movement. Nay, reform is not a system of pale negations, it has its positive constructive side which accentuates the universal import of the religious truths preached and expounded in Judaism from the days of the prophets, and which though hidden temporarily beneath an encrustation of enveloping forms and ceremonies only needed to shed these accretions in order to shine forth undimmed as ever.

It is usually and rightly held that reform in Judaism in this country was directly connected with the efforts put forth in Germany in this direction, and that notably the Hamburg Temple movement was mirrored in the earliest effort for religious reform in this country at Charleston, South Carolina. The same causes produced the same effects in Hamburg and Berlin on the other side, and in Charleston on this side. It was essentially the spirit of freedom here and abroad which breathing upon the dry bones of Judaism bade them live again; the era of freedom was the new Ezekiel summoning the spirit of the Lord to revivify the house of Israel. The initial effort toward reform in this country, however, did not flourish as did the similar movement in Hamburg, particularly because there was as yet no competent leader to direct the work; the forty-seven Jews of Charleston who signed the first petition to the Congregation in 1824, requesting reforms in the service formed a fine nucleus and would have accomplished much had there been at that time in Charleston a theologian of broad learning and strong personality who would have been able to give the

movement the authority and distinction which only learning and personal force can impart; the movement languished despite the splendid efforts of Isaac Harby, the member of the congregation who was the guiding spirit among the petitioners. The election of Gustav Poznanski in 1835 as minister of the Congregation gave new inspiration to the reform element and really brought the Charleston movement into line with the Hamburg reform Congregation, for Poznanski had come from that city and brought into his work in the new world the ideas he had imbibed before leaving the Hanseatic town.

In 1843 the Har Sinai Congregation of Baltimore was incorporated as a reform congregation and in 1845 the Emanuel Congregation of New York. The organization of these two pioneer reform congregations was really the beginning of the free and full development that the spirit of Judaism was to experience in this land. Here the conditions were altogether different than in Europe. There were no restrictions. There were no communal or congregational traditions There was no governmental interference. True, the Jews who emigrated hither brought with them the traditions they had received from their fathers and at first European religious conditions were simply transplanted. There were many Judaisms represented in the various congregations that were organized; there were Polish congregations, Dutch congregations, Hungarian congregations, English congregations, German congregations, many geographical Judaisms, if I may use that term; but although traditional customs and mediaeval conceptions were

thus transplanted, such a condition of things could not last here. The American spirit was pervasive and the Jew could not but be affected by that spirit in his religion as he was in every other interest in life. America had to produce an American Judaism, and it did produce an American Judaism. This term is frequently declared to be paradoxical and unmeaning and we who use it are accused of introducing an unwarranted and unjustifiable element of differentiation into the general conception of Judaism. But it requires only a moment's consideration to recognize that what we call American Judaism is something as distinctive as were Palestinian Judaism and Hellenistic Judaism of old, as was Babylonian Judaism in the early Christian centuries, as were Spanish and Russian Judaism in later days; if it is legitimate to use these modifying adjectives to define various broad tendencies in Jewish thought and development in these different lands and ages past, it is no less legitimate to use the term American Judaism now, for it, too, has a distinct and definite meaning. American Judaism is the latest expression that the prophetic spirit of universal religion has assumed.

Broadly speaking, there have always been two streams of thought in Judaism, prophetism versus ritualism, Hellenistic versus Palestinian Judaism, the broad thinkers among the rabbis of old, the Hillelites, the Johanan ben Zakkais, the Akibas, the Joshua ben Chananyahs, the Meirs, versus the Shammaites, the Eliezer ben Hyrkanos, the Tarfons, and among later thinkers the Leo da Modenas, the Solomo del Medigos, the Joseph Albos versus the

Asheris, the Raawads, the Joseph Karos, and as a matter of course, the orthodox versus the reformers since the opening of the nineteenth century. True, owing to the circumstances of Jewish life during the Christian centuries the freer movements of thought which of old had flowered so gloriously in prophetism and Hellenistic Judaism could not receive full swing, but when the revolutions which inaugurated the modern era made of the Jew a free man, the spirit of Judaism soared once more into the regions of universal thought and religion. And this is American Judaism; a reassertion of the world embracing ideas and the world enveloping hopes of ethical monotheism, an optimistic outlook toward the messianic age, a substitution of prophetic vision for legalism and mediaevalism, a fearless propagandism of the message that God's revelation is continuous, and therefore religion, the embodiment of that revelation must adapt its teachings and its methods to the changing needs and requirements of the successive ages of the world to whom God speaks as surely as ever He did in ages past. American Judaism is possible because of the free American spirit; the breadth of thought that American Judaism represents shall dominate the future unless the prophets of the race have babbled vain things. I have not said American Reform Judaism, but American Judaism, for the two will be, if they are not yet, identical; mediaeval orthodoxy and traditionalism can not long flourish here; the future belongs to reform despite present opposing phenomena in the Jewish religious world; but of this I shall have more to say later on.

It was an extremely fortunate circumstance that at the time when the reform agitation was beginning in the United States there were competent men here to take the helm of leadership. True, the Baltimore and New York congregational movements, to which reference has been made, were inaugurated by laymen; and this is extremely significant, for it shows that the need for reform arose from the people; the life which the people were leading in the new time made the observance of rabbinical Judaism as traditionally handed down impossible; the new outlook demanded a readjustment of the standards; but the people, however earnest and well-intentioned, can not of themselves guide any larger movement safely and wisely; strong men are necessary. For that reason the Baltimore movement did not become really significant until David Einhorn, disheartened by his experiences in Pesth, emigrated to this country, where he felt he would find the right field for his activity as a religious reformer. But nine years before Einhorn placed foot on the American shore, the man had landed here who more than any other was to set the stamp of his powerful personality upon the development of Judaism in this country. Isaac M. Wise came to the United States because the free spirit wherewith he had been dowered at birth could not brook the narrow restrictions and limitations of the surroundings wherein he had been reared. With the instinct of genius he perceived the possibilities in this land. Though born abroad he was the embodiment of the American spirit; he was democratic through and through, democratic in his sympathies, in his leanings,

in his thoughts, in his hopes, in his ideals. For him Judaism spelt democracy too, and therefore he perceived that the American environment gave Judaism such an opportunity for its true development as it had not had since the Roman legions set flame to the temple that crowned Moriah's height, and the Jews were scattered to the four corners of the earth.

My task in this appreciation penned in honor of the centenary of the birth of the great leader is not to produce a biographical sketch, for this has been done already fully and satisfactorily in the two volumes, Dr. Wise's own valuable Reminiscences,[1] quite the most interesting and illuminating volume of Jewish autobiography published in this country and the excellent Life by Judge Max B. May, the grandson of the famous rabbi.[2] It shall rather be my purpose to attempt to visualize the man and his achievements and thus give a pen picture of the career which stands easily first in the annals of American Jewry.

Isaac M. Wise was both a dreamer and a man of affairs, an idealist and a realizer, a thinker and an achiever, a student and an organizer. His was the indomitable optimism of the men who dare and who never acknowledge defeat. Obstacle and difficulty but spurred him on to further effort. Discouragement gave way constantly to renewed hope. He fitted thoroughly into the American environment.

[1] Reminiscences by Isaac M. Wise translated and edited by David Philipson, Cincinnati 1901.

[2] Isaac Mayer Wise. A Biography by Max B. May, New York, 1916.

Freedom was the breath of his nostrils. He came to these shores because of the opportunities here offered for the unhampered development of human powers. As Jew and as man he had chafed under the restrictions of the Hapsburg rule in his native land. Had he remained in Europe he would in all likelihood have cast his lot with the brave spirits who arose against autocracy and tyrannical authority in the revolutionary year 1848; in fact the only time that he ever felt a desire to return to Europe was in that year. But though his was a free spirit he was a devout believer in constituted authority, the authority set up by the people themselves whether now it was in the general sphere of government or in private institutional life. A thorough going individualist he was yet a devoted adherent to the idea of organization. As a reformer he contended for the right of the individual Jew living in the nineteenth century to an interpretation of his faith conformably with the thought and the needs of the time but he insisted also that such individualism, necessary as it was, must yet be curbed by organization if it was not to degenerate into religious anarchy. Individual freedom and organized effort may therefore be considered the watchwords of his life. His many sided activity as rabbi, as citizen, as editor, as founder of a congregational union, a rabbinical seminary, and a rabbinical conference, was the expression of these watchwords. Of that remarkable career let an estimate be now attempted.

The Reformer

"The reforming spirit was innate in me: it was my foremost characteristic."[3] Thus wrote Isaac M. Wise in his autobiographical reminisecnces when describing his view-point at the outset of his life in the United States. He took an active interest in all projects for the betterment and reformation of society. With tongue and pen he championed all progressive causes. His were both the critical acumen which detected the faults in the existing order and the fiery zeal which aroused others to work with him for the eradication of these faults. Although a citizen of the world and therefore interested in all that made for the welfare and improvement of society in general, still as rabbi his especial attention was given to the concerns of the house of Israel and his reforming zeal was directed particularly towards championing the cause of Reform Judaism. He felt that in the free American environment Judaism had an opportunity for growth and development which it possessed nowhere else. But if it was to grow and develop here it must slough such forms, ceremonies, observances and view points which did not comport with the spirit of the time, re-adapt such others as still had the power of appeal and create if necessary new institutions which would express the underlying principles of Judaism in a manner acceptable to the men and the women of the nineteenth century. In a lengthy essay entitled "Reformed Judaism," written in 1871 he sets forth his matured views on the subject. By that time he had grown very clear in his

[3] Reminiscences p. 49.

thought. For twenty-five years he had led the tempestuous life of the fighter for progress. He had spoken and written constantly. He had met with bitter opposition not only from the traditionalists but also from reformers whose views did not altogether agree with his. But his zeal had not diminished, his faith in the truth of the reform principle had not weakened. He mounted from step to step. At the close of a quarter century of intense thought and constant activity he had reached a point whence his outlook was clear and unobstructed. There is no dubiety any longer, no hesitation, if ever there had been any. His words are clear cut expressions of his positive standpoint. "The civilization of the nineteenth century being the sum and substance of all previous phases," he writes, "has produced conditions unknown in former periods of history. Therefore, the principle of Judaism also must develop new forms corresponding to the new conditions which surround its votaries who live among the civilized nations; forms too, which were neither necessary nor desirable in former periods of history, and would not be such now to other Israelites, although adhering to the same principle, who live among semi-barbarous, or even less enlightened nations. Again, as civilization progresses, the principle of Judaism will always develop new forms in correspondence with every progressive state of the intelligence and consciousness, until the great day when one shepherd and one flock will unite the human family in truth, justice and love."

The underlying truths of Judaism are absolute, the forms in which these truths find expression are

relative. This being the principle which guided him, Wise from the very beginning advocated changes in the public form of worship and in religious customs. His first reform of which there is record was the introduction of a mixed choir and family pews in the synagog of the congregation at Albany shortly after he assumed religious leadership there. Both these reforms aroused intense feeling because they were radical departures from the established order. In the orthodox synagog woman took no active part in the service. The religious emancipation of the Jewish woman is one of the notable achievements of the reform movement. Abraham Geiger struck the first note in his striking essay "The Position of Woman in the Judaism of our Time,"[4] which appeared in 1836. This great reformer urged the justice and the necessity of the religious enfranchisement of woman, but Geiger did not succeed in carrying the theory into practice; conditions in Europe did not permit this at the time. It was left for Wise to inaugurate this blessed reform which has meant so much in the development of Jewish religious and institutional life in this country.

The reform of the prayer book received early attention from Wise. The traditional prayer book contained prayers, petitions and liturgical sections which were simply survivals from a former stage of worship and did not really express the beliefs of the progressive Jew in the modern environment. Most of the prominent reformers, both in Europe and the United States undertook the reform of the prayer book It was felt by most of them that all petitions

[4] Infra "Abraham Geiger" p. 143.

for the restoration of the sacrificial worship in a rebuilt temple at Jerusalem under the ministration of the Aaronic priesthood, and for the re-establishment of the Jewish state under the rule of a descendant of the house of David should be eliminated It was also felt that the universalistic note should be stressed in the prayers. While the reformers held to the doctrine of the election of Israel as the priest people of humanity they interpreted this in the spirit of the great prophet of the Exile to whom we owe the classic phrase that terms Israel "the servant of the Lord." This implied for the reformers the further thought that the Messiah of Jewish hope was to be no one man but that the people Israel is the Messiah, the Lord's anointed; hence all petitions for the coming of a personal Messiah were removed from the prayer book and their place taken by prayers for the coming of a Messianic age of universal justice, mercy and peace, the golden age forecast by the prophets of Israel. It was also urged that portions of the service should be read in the vernacular since the Hebrew was unintelligible to many worshippers.

Individual reformers published their own prayer books so that in time there were well nigh as many prayer books in use as there were reform rabbis of prominence. From the very start Wise felt that the preparation of the reform prayer book was a matter for concerted and not for individual action. As will appear shortly when the subject of rabbinical conferences will be treated, he advocated the need of a reform ritual at the first gathering of rabbis in this country in 1846. The subject being referred to him he prepared a manuscript for submission at a later

meeting. That meeting was not called. Therefore although he had prepared a manuscript of a reform prayer book he laid it aside. He waited hoping always that there would be some organization formed that would undertake this important task. It was not till 1856 that in co-operation with Rabbis Kalisch and Rothenheim, a committee appointed at the Cleveland Conference in 1855, he published the Minhag America, the prayer book which has always been associated with his name. This name Minhag America is very significant and indicates one of the leading thoughts which animated Wise throughout his life. The term which may be rendered "The American Rite" suggests at once the terms familiar to all students of the Jewish liturgy, "Minhag Ashkenaz," "Minhag Sefard," "Minhag Polen" and the like, namely "The German Rite," "The Spanish Rite," "The Polish Rite," meaning of course the liturgy in use among German, Spanish and Polish Jews respectively. By adopting a parallel name for the prayer book intended for American Jewish congregations Wise doubtless wished to serve notice of his conviction that just as there was speech of German Judaism, Spanish Judaism, Polish Judaism, so also was there an American Judaism. I believe he was the first to use this term. He believed that in free America Judaism would assume an expression different from any manifestation it had assumed in European or Asiatic lands for in the free atmosphere of the United States Judaism would have an opportunity to develop freely and unobstructedly such as it had not had during all the centuries of European oppression and repression.

This Minhag America which eliminated all petitions for the return to Palestine, the rebuilding of the temple of Jerusalem, the reinstitution of the sacrifices, the restoration of the Aaronic priesthood and the Davidic dynasty was gradually adopted by the great majority of the reform congregations in the western and southern portions of the country. Wise changed even the Hebrew form of a number of the prayers; he gave traditional particularistic petitions a universalistic rendering. Prayers expressive of the belief in the bodily resurrection were changed by him so as to express the doctrine of spiritual immortality. He excised most of the *piyyutim*[5] with which the traditional prayer book was overloaded. He provided English and German translations for the Hebrew prayers although in his own congregation the service was conducted entirely in Hebrew with the exception of occasional prayers up to the time of the adoption of the Union Prayer Book published by the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the greater portion of which is in the vernacular. By having his congregation discard his own book, the Minhag America, and adopt the Union Prayer Book the great leader performed a remarkable act of self abnegation. The example set by his congregation was followed by scores of congregations which had been using the Minhag America. By this act he showed his fidelity to the principle of organization. As early as 1846 he had urged the need for an accredited rabbinical body to prepare a ritual for public worship; this was not achieved in the United States until 1894 when the Central Conference of American

[5] Liturgical poems.

Rabbis published the Union Prayer Book. At once this true protagonist of union and co-operation gave practical testimony to the sincerity of his life long preachment. By this self effacing deed of the leading rabbi in the country the Union Prayer Book was given public endorsement as the recognized ritual of American Reform Judaism, more than by any other single act. This book which is now used by more than three hundred congregations has become indeed a bond of union for the reform congregations of the United States. It has done more than any other single factor in displacing the individualism which so hampered united action among the early reformers. By the co-operation symbolized by the Union Prayer Book the reform synagogue has become a great religious force. By retaining the frame work of the traditional prayer book on the one hand and including passages expressive of the modern religious outlook on the other, this ritual combines past and present. It is thus both conservative and progressive, showing the connection of the reform movement with the continuing spirit of God as manifested in Israel throughout the ages and expressing the eternal values of Judaism in words appealing to the religious consciousness of the modern age.

The Rabbinical Conference

It is remarkable that almost from the day that Isaac M. Wise began his active career as rabbi in Albany he conceived plans which were realized many years later in the institutions which he founded. He had been in Albany scarcely a month when he joined with the Rev. Dr. Max Lilienthal in October 1846 in

assembling the first conference of rabbis in this country. This gathering called by the traditional name Beth Din was very modest in numbers and in purpose. It consisted of only four men but it is significant as the first step in that long journey which ended in the great achievement, the organization of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in July 1889. Although as he says he did not like the name Beth Din which was suggested by Dr. Lilienthal still he acquiesced because he "felt that only good could come from the co-operation of the men named." Co-operation! this was the master word which remained the touchstone of his activity throughout life. Time and again he failed in his attempts at permanent co-operation with his rabbinical colleagues but never utterly discouraged, he persisted until success finally crowned his efforts.

The steps in the progress which began with the Beth Din of 1846 are an eloquent commentary on the man's indefatigable spirit. The Beth Din held but this one meeting. Plans were discussed and tasks assigned at this initial meeting but the plans remained a pious wish and the tasks were not completed. Those plans included the preparation of a catechism and Biblical history for Jewish schools and a reform ritual for the congregations, to be called Minhag America. It was nine years ere the effort to form a rabbinical organization which Wise kept advocating in the public press and from the pulpit received sufficient support from his colleagues to justify a second attempt.

The Cleveland Conference called in 1855 to bring into being a permanent general Jewish organization

or synod failed because of the great divergence on the subject of religious reforms among the rabbis. This Conference which aimed to unite all wings was wrecked on the rock of compromise. Isaac Leeser, the leader of the orthodox contingent, who was present at the Conference had succeeded in having included in the declaration of principles which were to guide all future synods the following paragraph defining the attitude towards the Talmud, "The Talmud contains the traditional, legal and logical exposition of the Biblical laws which must be expounded and practiced according to the comments of the Talmud." This paragraph called forth bitter protests from the radical reform congregations notably the Emanuel of New York and the Har Sinai of Baltimore. David Einhorn, rabbi of the latter congregation was particularly bitter against the Cleveland compromisers. Isaac Leeser too was not satisfied with the outcome of the deliberations which were of too progressive a tendency for him despite the paragraph on the Talmud just cited. Wise, Lilienthal and their confreres were thus belabored by the extremists among the reformers and the orthodox. Wise was greatly discouraged. The hope for union in American Jewry was the star that had led him on. For the sake of that union he was willing to meet all others half way. "Judaism, progress—American Judaism, free, progressive, enlightened, united, and respected—this was my ideal."[6]

In the synod all elements were to be represented so that Israel in America might present a united front. It was his expectation that the reformers by being

[6] Reminiscences p. 317.

united might swing the synod to the advocacy of a progressive policy. The protests of the Eastern reformers disillusioned and disappointed him beyond words. "A split among the reformers, whose principles were not yet definitely fixed, appeared to me an event painful and fraught with misfortune. It depressed and discouraged me completely, for without union among the reformers, who were in the minority, no progressive measures could be hoped for from the synod. There was hope for the victory of the reform element on the condition that its leaders were united. All the efforts for union were shattered, for the moment, at any rate, by these protests."[7] In the light of Wise's well known reforming spirit, it has been difficult for many to understand how he could favor the adoption of the paragraph on the Talmud in the Cleveland platform. But for him at this time "Union in Israel" was the paramount consideration. He indulged the dream that if only the various elements could be brought together in one organization the reform principle must ultimately triumph. And to secure that organization he felt that all must sacrifice something, reformers as well as orthodox. This alone can explain the Cleveland platform. Later he recognized the futility of his hopes for a union of all Israel and bent his energies towards a consolidation of the progressive forces. The Cleveland Conference proved abortive as far as the larger hope was concerned. Reformers and orthodox came no closer together. Lilienthal and Leeser carried on a spirited controversy. Wise, the unconquerable optimist, rebounded from the despair which had

[7] Reminiscences p. 317-318.

settled upon him and now and again in the columns of his organ the Israelite, propounded his pet project of union and co-operation.

The next move however did not proceed directly from him. His whilom opponents among the reformers took steps to call a conference of reform rabbis. Forgetting past recriminations the Cincinnati rabbis Wise and Lilienthal joined with their Eastern colleagues and in 1869 met with them at Philadelphia. This Conference adopted a declaration of principles frankly and unhesitantly reform in character. Again the flood gates of bitter debate were opened and the reformers were assailed without mercy by conservatives and traditionalists. Differences too arose again between the reformers in the East and the Central West so that none of the prominent rabbis from the East attended the rabbinical Conference held in Cleveland in July 1870. Conferences were also held in New York in October of that same year and in Cincinnati in June 1871. But the spirit of full union even among the reformers was lamentably absent. An unfortunate incident growing out of the Cincinnati Conference known as "The Personal God Controversy" widened the breach between the Eastern reformers and Wise and his followers. Bitter invectives were hurled back and forth. The reformers of the two sections of the country seemed hopelessly apart.

Despairing of the union of the reform forces in the East and the West, Wise now determined to make a beginning with sympathetic coadjutors. In response to his efforts a number of delegates of Western and Southern congregations assembled at Cincinnati in

1873 and laid the foundation of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. But this is another story Here we are concerned particularly with the tale of rabbinical organization. Despite the repeated failures to form a permanent rabbinical association Wise still never lost faith in the outcome. He was so firmly convinced of the need of such an organization for the discussion of the religious problems in American Israel that he never relinquished the purpose. The old generation of rabbis began passing away. A new generation had arisen when shortly after the celebration of his seventieth birthday the ever young leader made another attempt to give form and substance to his pet plans for a rabbinical conference. The great prestige which was now his as the acknowledged leader of American Judaism and the fact that he had his own pupils, the graduates of the Hebrew Union College to depend upon made the success of this new venture an almost foregone conclusion. Colleagues who had stood with him in earlier days joined with his pupils in the successful launching of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in the city of Detroit in July 1889. It is a far cry from the meeting of the Beth Din of four members in October 1846 to the organization of the Central Conference forty three years later. During those four decades and more the intrepid leader, though occasionally defeated kept following the light which only he saw. The vision had grown clearer and clearer. For years he had wandered in the wilderness of contention and dissension, but more favored than many prophets and seers he not only glimpsed his promised land but entered into it. It was given him to live to enjoy

the fruits of his persistent labors. He outlived all opposition. He occupied an unique position. His leadership was now unquestioned. There was none to say him nay. For eleven years he presided at the annual meetings of the conference. He lived to see it become a great force in the religious life of organized progressive Jewry. The story of the Conference is told elsewhere.[8] Sufficient to record on the occasion of the centenary of the birth of the founder of the Conference the debt of all Jews in America to him, for whatever be the complexion of their beliefs, the splendid organized life among us is traceable to Isaac M. Wise, the father of organized religious effort in the United States. New issues have arisen, new problems confront us, but whatever the issues, whatever the problems, we recognize the significance of Wise's master passion, the need of co-operation and organization. Upon that rock we are building more and more. This is Wise's great legacy to his co-religionists. His genius for organization has borne rich fruit. The highly organized life of American Jewry rests upon the foundations he laid.

The Congregational Union.

Although the first practical evidence of co-operation appeared in Wise's participation in the meeting of the Beth Din called by Dr. Lilienthal in 1846 still his own vision was broader. In studying conditions in this country he was much impressed by the poverty of Jewish institutional life and the lack of united effort for the common Jewish welfare. There were a

[8] Infra, "The Principles and Achievements of the Central Conference of American Rabbis" p. 200 ff.

number of congregations, it is true, in New York and elsewhere, possibly a score in all, but there was no other form of organization. In describing conditions prevalent at the close of the first half of the nineteenth century he writes "The school system in general was in a deplorable condition. Religious instruction was imparted one hour in the week by ladies. Leeser furnished the text-books, all ultra-orthodox. There were no Jewish charities, with the exception of several decaying chebroth and two societies in New York. There was no provision for widows and orphans, no hospital. In brief, the American Jews had not one public institution, except their synagogues. In lieu thereof, the missionaries lay in ambush everywhere, in order to bait some poor Jew. It was perfectly evident to me that Judaism would have no future in America unless mighty upheavals, accompanied by constructive action, would arouse the better element into action, awaken and attract the thoughtless and indifferent, so that it would become reconciled with the spirit of the age and the opinions prevalent in the new fatherland."

The improvement of this deplorable condition was Wise's constant thought and desire. He felt that an assembly of representatives chosen by the congregations was imperative. He therefore issued in December 1848 an appeal for a union of congregations, the first document of its kind to appear in the United States This document, entitled "the Ministers and other Israelites" is remarkable in that the young enthusiast lays down here the program which guided his activity for the next quarter century until he saw

it realized in 1873 when the Union of American Hebrew Congregations was organized. A few paragraphs of this prophetic utterance may well be quoted: "There is perhaps not a single Israelite among my readers who is not fully inspired with the inclination to share in the mission of his ancient people, as the voice of God called to each individual of Israel, without exception of either sex, or age or spiritual abilities: 'But you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests.' Now, in order to fulfill our sacred mission, to send our important message to mankind, it behooves us to be united as one man; . . .We ought to have a uniform system for our schools, synagogues, benevolent societies—for all our religious institutions. This we need to have throughout the world, if we are to be considered as the same descendants of Israel, the same Disciples of Mosheh—if we are truly to fulfill our sacred mission . . . Let us now direct our attention to the country where we live and the circumstances in which we are placed. The majority of our congregations in this country have been established but a few years back; they are generally composed of the most negative elements from all the different parts of Europe and elsewhere; they have been founded and are now governed for the greater part by men of no considerable knowledge of our religion, and generally of no particular zeal for our common cause. The consequence of all this is that many congregations have no solid basis, no particular stimulus to urge on the youth to a religious life, and no nourishment for the spirtual Israelite. This naturally produces an enormous amount of indifference; and each congregation pursues its own

way, has its own customs and mode of worship, its own way of thinking about religious questions, from which cause it then results that one Jew is a stranger in the synagogue of the other Jew. . . . You see, we have no system for our worship, nor for our ministry and schools, and we are therefore divided in as many fragments as there are congregations in North America. It is lamentable, but true, that if we do not unite ourselves betimes to devise a practicable system for the ministry and religious education at large—if we do not take care that better educated men fill the pulpit and the schoolmaster's chair—if we do not stimulate all the congregations to establish good schools, and to institute a reform in their synagogues on modern Jewish principles, the house of the Lord will be desolate, or nearly so, in less than ten years, and the zeal of the different Christian missionaries will be sufficient to make among us a large number of unprincipled infidels. It needs no prophetic spirit to read this horrible future in the present circumstances. I lay down these lines before the throne of history as a solemn protest against the spirit of separate action and of indifferentism which has taken hold of so many noble minds of our brethren, and I proclaim before the whole world, before the present and future, my sincere conviction that now something must be done to defend and maintain our sacred faith. Nor is it too late; everything can be done if we are united before God. . . . I call upon all my honored friends, both ministers and laymen, and all who have an interest in the promulgation of God's law: come, let us be assembled in order to become united! Exercise all your influence on your friends

and acquaintances, to bring together all men of zeal and piety, of wisdom and knowledge, to consider what should be done for the union, welfare and progress of Israel."

This first stirring call for union was fruitless of results. Before his own congregation in Albany, in New York City, in Philadelphia and elsewhere the eager and earnest issuer of that call for union addressed his brethren. He had enlisted the support of Isaac Leeser, the foremost orthodox rabbi of the country. The appeal was sent to all existing congregations. But it remained a pious hope for the time. Though momentarily disheartened Wise returned to the charge time and again in spoken and written word. In truth, he felt that he must have his own organ in whose columns he could advocate his views and present his projects. Therefore almost immediately after his assuming charge of the Bene Jeshurun congregation in Cincinnati in 1854 he began the publication of the "Israelite" (now known as the "American Israelite") the first number of which appeared in the beginning of July of that year. Week in, week out, year in, year out, he advocated his pet project of union in this most widely read Jewish journal in the United States. Public opinion had to be formed. Opposition had to be overcome. A following had to be secured. But not only by the written word did this indefatigable spirit strive towards his desired goal but also by the spoken utterance. He travelled hither and thither addressing his co-religionists in eloquent wise. He became the best known Jewish leader in the country. He had assumed a formidable task and knowing no such word

as fail he presented the project in a hundred different forms. "Union" was his text. The interpretations of that text were manifold. One will suffice to indicate the spirit which breathed through them all. "Every congregation," he wrote, "has a leader who reforms as he thinks proper. We do not struggle to maintain Judaism, we work to maintain a congregation, each by himself. We do not consider Israel's future, the future of a certain congregation is every leader's object. Since when are we so narrow-minded? Every reform congregation has its own views, its own prayer-book, its own catechism; every congregation behaves as a distinct sect. They call this the free development of the religious idea, we call it anarchy. They say it is beneficial, we say it keeps the congregations apart and gives rise to undue rivalry. History condemns it, common sense says, 'united we stand,' there is strength in union."

The program in the first call of 1848 became more definite in this statement of 1870. Other facts are also evident. In 1848 the rising young leader had a vision of the union of all Jews whatever their opinions and beliefs. As above stated he had clasped hands with Isaac Leeser, the spokesman of orthodoxy. Time had demonstrated the futility of that larger hope. Wise therefore concentrated his efforts upon securing a union of the reform forces as represented by the reform congregations. But here too he was destined to be doomed to disappointment. A number of great reform leaders were too individualistic; they could not and would not make concessions for the common weal. "Principiis obsta" was their motto. Wise on the other hand had statesmanlike qualities;

he was ready and willing to make compromises for the time being in order to secure larger aims. He himself clearly envisaged the difference between his own methods and that of his Eastern opponents as he once wrote "In the East reform is an object per se, with us it is secondary; we want reforms in order to endear and preserve our religion, therefore we ask the question, what benefit is this or that reform to our sacred cause; they want reform per se, and ask only the question, how will this or that reform be liked. Here is a difference of principle of which practical results speak. The Eastern reformers are theoretical, we are practical; they are negative, we are positive, they consider themselves wiser and more learned and more respectable than we are, that is, the bulk of the people, and keep aloof; we are democratic in our religious feelings." "Union" seemed to him so desirable and so necessary that in his opinion a policy of reciprocity must guide the leaders of Jewry. Still in his passion for union in the American reform synagogue he did not once advocate the surrender of congregational autonomy. He claimed that there were certain great communal tasks which could only be achieved by the congregations working in unison but that this by no means implied the relinquishment by any individual congregation of the management of its own affairs without interference by the Union of Congregations.

With all his persistency however, he could not induce the prominent reform rabbis in the Eastern part of the country to join with him. His plan had to be narrowed further. He had long ago surrendered the congenial hope of a union of all Israel, reform and

orthodox; now he was forced to the conclusion that there was no likelihood for the present at least that a union of even the reform congregations of the whole country was possible. The East was unresponsive. There was but one thing left and that was to organize with men and congregations willing to co-operate. Wise's campaigning for union during twenty-four years had not remained devoid of results. His influence was supreme in the Middle West and the South. When owing to discussions, aroused notably by a rabbinical conference held in Cincinnati in 1871, it became abundantly clear that the Eastern leaders would not join with the Cincinnati men, Wise and his following took the decisive step of calling a meeting of delegates of congregations in the West and South for the purpose of forming a Union of American Hebrew Congregations. That meeting took place in Cincinnati in July 1873. The labor of two decades and a half was finally crowned with success. What the young rabbi of Albany had dreamed had come true. Little wonder that the issue of the Israelite following that historic meeting contained a jubilant editorial. The hopes and efforts, the longings and endeavors of many years were now realized. It is not difficult to understand the joyousness of this man who had been so frequently disappointed but who yet would not lay down his arms, who had been so constantly and bitterly attacked but yet would not surrender, who had led what appeared a forlorn hope but yet followed his vision undeterred. Taking as text of his article on that historical gathering which called the Union into being the famous Isaianic passage "For a child was born unto us, a son was given

unto us and the dominion shall be upon his shoulder" he proceeds in moving words to tell what this Union stands for and what it hopes to achieve. "On the eighth, ninth and tenth days of July in the convention held in Cincinnati, the youngest child of Israel was born," he tells his readers. "The Union of American Hebrew Congregations was organized, constituted, and established. This is now an accomplished fact. We only wish to add that the work was done with fraternal unanimity and a feeling of solidarity such as few popular assemblies have ever manifested. Not a harsh word was spoken in three days, either in the Convention or in the committee-rooms; not one delegate left the spot dissatisfied or displeased. It was a feast of harmonious co-operation and of fraternization. We record this that future generations may know how their sires laid the foundation of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. The new chapter in our history begins with peace, and sends forth the ancient salutation to all, Shalom Alechem—'Peace to all of you.' "

The great organizer builded wiser than even he knew at the time. The great achievement became ever greater with the passing of the years. The breach between the reformers of the East and the West was healed when in 1878 the leading Eastern congregations joined the Union. The founder of this congregational union had the joy of witnessing the remarkable expansion of the organization. The score of congregations whose representatives organized the Union have grown to a great host until now there is scarcely a reform congregation in this country which is not included in the membership of the central body.

Here again the old proverb has proven true that it is the first step which counts. That first successful movement for union in American Jewry led the way for the remarkable development of the organizing and co-operating spirit which is so striking a feature in our present day Jewish life. Isaac M. Wise was a prophet and a pioneer. Where others failed, he succeeded. His masterful will, his unquenchable optimism, his unceasing activity and his intrepid spirit rose triumphant over all obstacles; it is not too much to say that his is the most impressive figure in the history of Judaism in the United States.

The Rabbinical Seminary

Another of the pet projects which Dr. Wise cherished from the early days of his career was the establishent of an institution for the education and training of rabbis. When he arrived in this country the congregations, few though they were, were poorly served with scant exceptions. In most instances incapable men, sometimes ignorant, frequently uncouth and unrepresentative stood at the head of the congregations. Wise sensed the situation thoroughly. He recognized that possibly the greatest need for Jew and Judaism was that they should be capably led and worthily represented. His cry for many years was that American congregations must have American rabbis, men educated in America, men filled with the free spirit of America, men who combined a modern American education with a knowledge of Jewish lore. Again as in the case of the rabbinical conference and the congregational union it was a score of years and more ere the project took definite

shape and form. During these years the untiring leader kept the project before the public. Truly he knew not failure. Persistency finally won the day in this instance as in his other plans.

With the passing of time his ideas as to the character of the institution changed. This was due partly to changes in the general educational situation and partly to the clarifying of his own thought and purpose. His earliest suggestion was the establishment by Jews of an institution for the training of rabbis and teachers in which not only the Hebrew and religious but also secular branches should be taught. In other words this institution was to be not entirely a rabbinical or theological school but was to furnish also a secular education. For the maintenance of this institution to be known as Zion College he advocated the formation of associations in the various Jewish communities entitled Zion Collegiate Associations. By dint of personal appeals he succeeded in having five such associations organized in as many cities, namely Cincinnati, Louisville, New York, Cleveland and Baltimore. Zion College was opened in the fall of 1855 in Cincinnati but owing to lack of active support and even opposition it was very short lived. Again he was years ahead of his generation. Twenty years later when he penned his reminiscences, he wrote concerning this institution, "If American Jewry had been ripe for such an undertaking at that time, as some few men in Cincinnati and Louisville were, what could not a school such as that college have accomplished within the space of twenty years? There would have been no necessity to look today with a Diogenes' lantern for educated preachers and teachers

fully acquainted with the English language and conversant with the customs and habits of the country."[9]

He felt that American leaders were needed for American congregations. He could not reconcile himself to the thought that young men should be sent from this country to Germany for their rabbinical training and higher education. He felt that Israel in America was orphaned so long as the congregations were not shepherded by men of American training and filled with the American spirit. The columns of the Israelite teem with editorial comments on this theme. Nothing daunted by the Zion College experience he challenged the attention of his readers without pause and without ceasing. Thus in January 1856 he asked, "Must not we, as well at least as the other religious denominations, also establish and support a seat of learning?" and in November 1858 he wrote, "Our cause in America requires American rabbis and teachers with American principles and eloquence, who are thoroughly acquainted with our mode of thinking and believing, our sentiments and convictions as they are to inculcate God's words in American hearts; therefore we must educate American rabbis and teachers. . . . Let us not forget to reflect on this subject." He believed thoroughly in the power of repetition as the most effective weapon to impress an idea; hence we find him writing time and again words to this effect: "As long as we must import our ministers and writers, we will be orphans in America, and as long as we have no college of our own, where Judaism is a branch of study, we cannot expect ministers and

[9] Reminiscences p. 325.

writers for our cause." More and more imperative grew the need for American rabbis as the years passed for a new generation of Jews born in America was being educated in American public schools; this led the intrepid interpreter of American Judaism to write in 1869: "In twenty years or less, four-fifths of the American Israelites will not understand much more German than French; but they will have to import preachers and teachers from Europe as they do now, because no American Israelites study theology. Why do they not? . . . We must learn where the fault lies, and we must remove the obstacles; if we do not, the American Temple will in twenty years be an outlandish institution of which passing men and women will say, 'Here my father and mother used to worship. . . .' We must have American preachers and teachers, cost what it may. We must have them as early as possible, if we have soul enough to love and heart enough to support our cause. We want concert of action and a union of many, many purses and the balance will come of itself."[10]

It was a long campaign of education which the nineteenth century seer of American Jewry conducted; besides advocating the need of a rabbinical training school in the columns of his newspaper, he travelled up and down the land exhorting Jewish communities everywhere to be up and doing. He sounded this note in season and out of season. By personal contact he built up a large following notably in the Middle West and the South. His untiring endeavors were rewarded

[10]For these and other expressions on this subject cf. May, Isaac Mayer Wise 262 ff.

at last. Under his inspiration and guidance his own Cincinnati people in both his own and the other congregations of the city finally took the first practical step towards the long wished for goal. A general committee was formed which in May 1873 resolved "to issue a call to all congregations in the West and South for a congregational convention to form a Union of Congregations under whose auspices a 'Jewish Theological Institute' shall be established . . ."[11] As has already been told, that convention was held in July of that year and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations was organized there and then; the first object of that Union was declared to be the establishment of a "Hebrew Theological College to preserve Judaism intact, to bequeath it in its purity and sublimity to posterity, to Israel united and fraternized, to establish, sustain and govern a seat of learning, for Israel's religion and learning."

The hope long deferred was realized. The joy which possessed the sturdy fighter was given expression to in ecstatic terms. After years of strife with oppositon, of struggle with indifference, of unceasing effort and uninterrupted endeavor, the goal was within reach. Two years were to elapse however before it was finally attained. During these two years the practical measures preliminary to the actual opening of the institution were worked out. At last the day of fulfilment dawned. Who that was present will ever forget the impressive service in the Plum St. Temple on the third day of October 1875 when the great organizer of the reform religious forces

[11]Ibid 280.

of American Jewry, too deeply moved to speak at great length, simply expressed his joy that after twenty-six years of struggle his labors had been crowned with success. He could not find words adequate to express his feelings. The occasion spoke louder than words the most eloquent. To his mind the safety and continuance of American Judaism were now assured.

Many as were his interests during the remaining twenty-four years of his life the Hebrew Union College held first place in his thoughts and his affections. It was the child of his spirit. To it he devoted time and energy. The beginnings were very small. At times it seemed scarcely possible to continue the work. The prospect was often dark. Encouragement frequently failed. Material and financial support was slow in coming forward. Undismayed though often discouraged, the father of the college pressed forward. He would not relinquish what had been gained. If only the pioneer years of storm and stress would be safely weathered, the haven must be reached where the ship which was carrying all the hopes of American Jewry would rest in security. That haven was indeed reached when the first ordination of rabbis took place in July 1883. The objectors were silenced, the mockers were put to shame. Triumph had come at last. American congregations would now be led by men who could interpret the age old truths of Judaism in the language of the land and in accord with the free spirit of America. What pen can describe the feelings of master and pupils in that supreme moment of the late afternoon of July 14,

1883, when the hand of the master was laid in blessing upon the heads of the first four graduates of the institution and his lips pressed their brows in the kiss of consecration! There are occasions when words fail. Silence is the most appropriate tribute. So be it now when memory recalls to the writer that high point in life's onward journey.

The ensuing years witnessed the growing development of the institution. Students came from all parts of the land. Each year the beloved spiritual father welcomed his "boys" on the opening day with loving words. Each day during the scholastic year found him at his post in the class room. serving voluntarily and devoting his great powers gladly and freely to the education of Israel's future leaders Through these leaders one hundred and eighty-eight of whom have been graduated, the college has become the corner stone of the temple of progressive American Judaism. The unconquerable spirit of Isaac M. Wise achieved this. Through the Hebrew Union College he became the foremost benefactor of American Judaism. Had he done nothing else but found this institution it would have been enough But he did much more. And because of all that he dared and achieved, it may be claimed, without detracting in any way from the merit of others, that his is the first place among the religious leaders in American Israel. In the Hebrew Union College he built his own perpetual memorial. The present beautiful buildings he did not live to see but though in a literal sense, he took no part in their erection, they are none the less his memorial. And should in

the course of time the institution occupy a new and even more magnificent home, this too will be his memorial. For the house is but the palpable show of the spirit which dwells within. The glowing spirit of Isaac M. Wise brought into being the spiritual Hebrew Union College. That glowing spirit is eternal. Though the glory of the second home of the College surpasses anything that the founder ever indulged in his fondest dreams, it is but the reflection of his indomitable spirit. That spirit is marching on in the continuing work of the College and its graduates. Isaac M. Wise built for the ages. Long as Judaism shall exist in America his name shall stand among the highest in the record of spiritual achievement.

Americanism and Zionism

Whoever came into close contact with Dr. Wise must have been impressed with his democratic sympathies and his intense faith in America and American institutions. In one of his many conversations with the writer he set forth the reasons for his leaving his native land and finally summed them up in the sentence "I had the American fever." The fervency for America which impelled him to seek these shores never diminished in ardor. He had a wholesome dislike for the autocratic system of government which obtained in Austria. Because of this dislike he never returned to Europe even for a visit. The only time he ever had any desire to go back to Europe was in the revolutionary year 1848. The reports of the struggles for freedom awoke a

responsive echo in his democratic soul. He had however found his life work in the United States. That life work was the welding of the spirit of Judaism with the spirit of America. This is the keynote of all his activity. How constant this aim was from the very beginning appears throughout his own autobiographical story. In writing of his early days in Albany in 1846 he speaks of himself as "an enthusiast on the subjects of America and freedom,"[12] and he defined this program of action at that time ni these words: "It was perfectly evident to me that Judaism would have no future in America unless mighty upheavals, accompanied by constructive action would arouse the better element into action, awaken and attract the thoughtless and indifferent, so that it would become reconciled with the spirit of the age and the opinions prevalent in the new fatherland."[13] No words can describe better than these the ideas underlying his entire future course of action. One more passage from his Reminiscences descriptive of his thought two years later (1856) must be set down here for it burns with his passion for America and Americanism. "The Jew must be Americanized, I said to myself, for every German book, every German word reminds him of his old disgrace. If he continues under German influences as they are now in this country, he must become either a bigot or an atheist, a satellite or a tyrant. He will never be aroused to self consciousness or to independent thought. The Jew must become an American in order to gain

[12]Reminiscences p. 49.
[13]Ibid 85.

the proud self consciousness of the free born man. From that hour I began to Americanize with all my might, and was as enthusiastic for this as I was for reform. Since then, as a matter of course, the German element here as well as in Germany, has completely changed, although Judeophobia and uncouthness have survived in many; but at that time it appeared to me that there was but one remedy that would prove effective for my co-religionists and that was to Americanize them thoroughly. We must be not only American citizens, but become Americans through and through outside of the synagogue. This was my cry then and many years thereafter."[14]

Time and again he reverted to this subject. One need take only a cursory glance through the volumes of his organ, to become convinced how prominently this doctrine of Americanism continues to stand forth in his public utterances. He and his colleague, Dr. Max Lilienthal, although of foreign birth were American in the fullest sense for they had imbibed the American spirit. They loved this country and the ideals for which it stands. For Wise the United States represented the hope of the world and incidentally the hope of Judaism and its future. When anti-Semitism became rampant in Germany in the late seventies and early eighties he became even more deeply convinced of this than he had been before, if this were possible. The horrible persecution of the Jews in Russia beginning in 1881 and continuing for many years thereafter in the guise of pogrom, murder and pillage made him despair of betterment

[14]Ibid 331.

of the European situation and carried him on the other hand to exalt America in ever more lofty strains. He frequently contrasted Russian Judaism with American Judaism. He felt that in the whirligig of time these two had come into conflict in this country. Russian Judaism represented for him the result of a cramped environment of oppression, American Judaism the outcome of free life. He did all in his power to assist in aiding the hapless victims of Russian persecution and was happy in the thought that they were finding a refuge in this land of freedom, but yet he viewed with alarm the effect upon Judaism in this country that these myriads of new comers might have. The old fight for Americanism which had engaged his energies in early years had now to be resumed. There was danger of a russification of Jew and Judaism. He took up the cudgels anew. The Russian Jew had brought to this country the Russian Jewish point of view. In Russia the Jews were a separate national element; they were not Russian of the Russians; they did not speak the language of the country but had a language of their own, the mongrel yiddish. They were aliens in the land of their birth. Dr. Wise recognized the danger of their view points to the welfare of Jew and Judaism in the United States. These were antipodal to all that he had taught and contended for during his whole career. He set his face like flint against the yiddish cult. He fought the doctrine of Jewish nationalistic separatism tooth and nail. Yiddishism and Zionism were to him anathema for they seemed to him to undermine the very foundations of American

Reform Judaism and to endanger the stability of the structure at the erection of which he had labored all his years. He spoke in no uncertain tones concerning political Zionism. He recognized fully that the antagonism between universalistic Judaism as taught by the reform movement and nationalism as defined in the Zionistic program was deep seated and vital. During the four years which intervened between the time that Theodor Herzl published his pamphlet "The Jewish State" and Dr. Wise's death the great reformer continually set forth the danger of Zionism. He raised a warning voice against this neo-nationalism time and again. He felt that Zionism struck at the very roots of the great institutions which he had called into being, and therefore felt it his duty to have record made of the attitude of these institutions towards Zionism.

At the meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis held at Montreal in July 1897 Dr. Wise devoted a great portion of his presidential message to a discussion of Zionism. He said: "I consider it my duty also, Rev. Colleagues, to call your attention to the political projects engaging now a considerable portion of our co-religionists in Europe and also in our country, especially in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago and other large cities. I refer, of course, to the so-called 'Friends of Zion,' Chovavei Zion, who revive among certain classes of people the political national sentiment of olden times, and turn the mission of Israel from the province of religion and humanity to the narrow political and national field, where Judaism loses its universal and sanctified

ground and its historical signification. The persecution of the Jews in Russia and Roumania and the anti-Semitic hatred against the Jewish race and religion, as it still exists in Germany, Austria, and partly in France, roused among the persecuted and outraged persons the hapless feeling of being hated strangers among hostile Gentiles. It was quite natural that this humiliating experience roused in their memory the glory of the past when Israel was the great nation, the chosen people of God, and inspired in them the consolation, 'We are a great nation yet.' So the wronged man revenges himself on his oppressors generally with the pretext: I am as good and better than you. Generally speaking it is true, the persecuted is always better than his persecutors. This experience roused in those outraged men and women the old hope of restoration, the reconstruction of the Hebrew nationality, as in days of yore. The first step in this direction was the colonization of Palestine with Jewish agriculturists. This, of course, found favor and support among all good people, not indeed for the sake of Zion, but for the redemption of the persecuted and with the conviction that those poor neglected families can be redeemed morally and physically only by making of them honest and industrious tillers of the soil. Idealists and religious phantasts took hold upon this situation and made of it a general restoration of the Jews, and their returning to the Holy Land, although the greatest number of Jewish citizens in the countries where they enjoy all civil and political rights, loudly disavowed any such beliefs, hopes, or wishes; yet the

persecuted and expatriated from Russia and such other countries preached their new doctrine loudly and emphatically, and found advocates and friends also among Christians, more so even than among Jews. At last politicians seized the situation, and one of them, called Dr. Herzl, proposed to establish and constitute at once the Jewish State in Palestine, worked the scheme and placed it so eloquently before the Jewish communities, that the utopian idea of a Jewish State took hold of many minds, and a congress of all Friends of Zion was convoked in the city of Munich, to meet there in August next. However, all this agitation on the other side of the ocean concerned us very little. We are perfectly satisfied with our political and social position. It can make no difference to us, in what form our fellow-citizens worship God, or what particular spot of the earth's surface we occupy. We want freedom, equality, justice, and equity to reign and govern the community in which we live. This we possess in such a fulness that no State whatever could improve on it. That new Messianic movement over the ocean does not concern us at all. But the same expatriated, persecuted, and outrageously wronged people came in large numbers also to us, and they being still imbued with their home ideas, ideals, and beliefs, voiced these projects among themselves and their friends so loudly and so vehemently, that the subject was discussed rather passionately in public meetings, and some petty politicians of that class were appointed as delegates, we learn, to the Munich congress, and in each case of those meetings, as reported by the press, so an so many rabbis

advocated those political schemes, and compromised in the eyes of the public the whole of American Judaism as the phantastic dupes of a thoughtless utopia, which is to us a fata morgana, a momentary inebriation of morbid minds, and a prostitution of Israel's holy cause to a madman's dance of unsound politicians. Some of our colleagues—I recollect just now Dr. Gottheil and Dr. Kohler—gave utterance to our opinions in the New York meeting. But the newspaper world knows not difference of persons and dignitaries, it reported to all the world that so and so many rabbis advocated the scheme and two opposed it. The honour and position of the American Israel demand imperatively that this conference, which does represent the sentiments of American Judaism, minus the idiosyncracies of those late immigrants, declare officially the American standpoint in this unpleasant episode of our history."[15]

The Committee to whom the president's message was referred reported a resolution which was adopted unanimously by the members present.[16]

In his presidential address at the opening of the Hebrew Union College in September 1897 Dr. Wise admonished the assembled students in these words: "Talmud Torah is the curriculum of this college. We want teachers of Judaism. Judaism, we say, and not nationalism, Judaism and not Zionism, Judaism and not Messiahism of any kind; that eternal Judaism

[15]Year Book Central Conference of American Rabbis for 1897-98, pp. X-XII.

[16]Infra, "The Principles and Achievements of the Central Conference of American Rabbis" p. 214.

which is not tied down to a certain piece of land here or there, or to a certain form of government and peculiar laws and institutions. We teach and train students for the office of teachers that are loyal and patriotic citizens of our own country and our entire nation among whom we live and of whom we are an integral element." No equivocation here; the sentences are crisp and to the point; the thought is clear. The great president went so far as to contrast Judaism with nationalism, or Zionism; in his thought they were antagonistic.

The first meeting of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations to take place after the official birth of the Zionist movement at Basle, Switzerland, was that held at Richmond, Va., in December 1898. With the passing of time Dr. Wise had grown even more firmly convinced, if that were possible, of the basic conflict between Zionism and the interpretation of Judaism which he had championed for over half a century, the interpretation too which was represented by the congregational union. He felt that the delegates of the congregations assembled at Richmond should place the Union on record. He asked the writer to bring the subject to the attention of the meeting. His request was complied with and the appointment of a committee was moved to formulate a statement for submission to the convention. The statement which met with Dr. Wise's full concurrence and which was adopted by the delegates reads: "We are unalterably opposed to political Zionism. The Jews are not a nation but a religious community. Zion was a precious possession of the past, the early home

of our faith where our prophets uttered their world subduing thoughts and our psalmists sang their world enchanting hymns. As such it is a holy memory but it is not our hope of the future. America is our Zion. Here, in the home of religious liberty, we have aided in founding this new Zion, the fruition of the beginning laid in the old. The mission of Judaism is spiritual, not political. Its aim is not to establish a State but to spread the truth of religion and humanity throughout the world."

Well nigh a score of years has elapsed since the great master was called to his eternal rest. It has been asserted now and then by disciples of his who have become recreant to his teaching that had Dr. Wise lived longer he would have ceased his opposition to Zionism and in the light of events which have taken place would even have become a supporter of the movement. Such statements are altogether unwarranted. The whole trend of Dr. Wise's thought was along the lines of universalistic Judaism and against all narrowing interpretations. For him Judaism was a religion, not a political program. He stated this time and again but never more incessively than in the rejection of a proposal made by a prominent orthodox rabbi in 1889 that the Jews hold a special celebration of Columbus Day. "We are Jews in religion and religion only and exclusively," he wrote. "In all other respects we are members of the human family and in every country citizens and an integral portion of that country's population, sharing equally with its interests, ideals, rights and obliga-

tions. . . . We cannot and do not admit that we are anywhere a distinct element of the population, any more than the Methodists, Baptists, Catholics, Presbyterians, Episcopalians and Dissenters. We cannot and will not make any Jewish demonstration in memory of an event which belongs to the history of mankind. We can not and will not single ourselves out as a special political community and erect for ourselves a modern Ghetto."[17]

All Jewish political separatism was repugnant to him and ghettoism in any guise abhorrent. It is unthinkable that he should have become untrue to his innermost convictions.

Despite all untoward happenings, despite Germany's anti-Semitism and Russia's persecutions of Jews, despite Roumania's broken troth in alienizing her Jewish children, he never despaired of the final victory of right. Zionism spelt for him the relinquishment of all that he had taught and preached for over half a century. One can judge a man only from his words and deeds. And so judging, I believe it may be said without fear of contradiction that had it been given Isaac M. Wise to round out a century on this earth and to have seen victory crowning the aims of America and her allies in the great world war, he would have hailed this victory as a triumph of the ideals which he had championed all his life, the ideals of democracy and freedom. And as far as the fortunes of his co-religionists are concerned he would have urged as

[17]American Israelite, Vol. XXXV, No. 52, quoted May, Isaac Mayer Wise, 347.

always that Jews everywhere must be given the rights of men so that all lands should become the national homes of the Jews there born and there living. Then and then alone would he have felt the so-called Jewish question to be solved. If I read his thought aright and I believe I do, he would today as throughout his life, be at the forefront of those who regard Israel as an international religious community and not as a politico-nationalistic unit leading a separate group existence among the nations of the earth.

Of this universalistic interpretation of Judaism he was one of the latter day prophets. Dark clouds had appeared frequently on the horizon during his life time but he never lost heart completely. He continued optimistic and forward looking to the very end. His elasticity and youthfulness of spirit never forsook him. Who that was present on the memorable occasion of the celebration of his eightieth birthday can ever forget that thrilling moment when at the very close of a prolonged celebration, the hero of the hour, the ever youthful octogenarian, in response to the call that he speak a few words before the gathering dispersed, arose in his place and gave voice to the prophetic utterance: "The teachings of reform Judaism will be the religion of the twentieth century." Bold words, but announced with all the intensity of conviction. These words were spoken in the closing year of the nineteenth century and just one year before the final curtain was rung down on the stirring drama of the hero's life. It was granted him to see but a few months of that twentieth century concerning which

he made that startling prediction. Nineteen years have rolled by since he was gathered to his fathers. The twentieth century is well on its way. It has proved thus far the most momentous period in the world's history. The very foundations of civilization are rocking. Men's thoughts are revolutionized. A new order is at hand, a new heaven and a new earth. During the four years of the world war men's souls have been tried. Religions are being weighed in the balance. The fundamentals are being sought. Did Isaac M. Wise glimpse these things when he made that prophetic utterance? Are universalism and internationalism, the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, doctrines which lie at the very root of reform Judaism as Isaac M. Wise conceived it to be really the foundations of the new world order? If so, and thus it certainly appears, then was he a true prophet.

In that faith he lived and in that faith he died. His entire life was a progression. Obstacles were often thrown in his way, and though he might be momentarily discouraged, his dauntless spirit conquered and he began the contest anew. He went from strength to strength. He bore down all opposition, he triumped over every difficulty. He was a master in the sphere of his activity. When the end came life for him was all complete. The visions of his youth had become realized. Great institutions in American Judaism had arisen as he had planned them. He had grandly conceived, and he had grandly achieved. His soul is marching on. He speaks today through his disciples from scores of

pulpits. On this occasion of the centenary of his birth, as so frequently before, thousands are arising and calling him blessed. Blessed was he in his coming into life, blessed was he in his earthly activity, blessed shall be his name throughout eternity.

SAMUEL HOLDHEIM*

(1806-1860)

GREAT movements are identified with great personalities. The frequently used phrase, the "spirit of the age" is meaningless unless it be understood as signifying the spirit which finds expression through the thoughts and words of the men of the age; as Goethe put it, "Der Zeitgeist ist der Herren Geist." Every forward movement in the history of the world has been given force by the great spirits who have interpreted it to their contemporaries. The birth years of a new movement usually produce the mighty protagonists who shape the course of the movement. Whether the movement produces the men or the men create the movement is too large a question to be considered here. But this much may be said that when in the providence of God the silent forces which may have been working for centuries become actualized by visible phenomena, prophets arise who grasp the significance of the new revelation of God in the history of their time and translate this renewed manifestation of the divine spirit into language intelligible to the men of their generation. So was it also with the reform movement in Judaism In the course of the first half century of its existence; great men arose whose names will stand forth as its

[1] Centenary address at meeting of Central Conference of American Rabbis, July 4, 1906, at Indianapolis, Ind.

prophets for all time. This year nineteen hundred and six marks the centenary of the birth of Samuel Holdheim, the keenest and most incisive thinker among the early leaders of the Jewish reform movement and the man, who, with Abraham Geiger, will always occupy the foremost place among the rabbis of reform Judaism's creative period.

Holdheim was born in the town of Kempen in Prussian Poland. His early education was similar to that received by all Jewish youths of parts in those days; his keen mind grappled readily with the subtleties of Talmudical dialectics, and he was easily the most promising among the *bachurim* of his native place. His exceptional gifts marked him as likely to have a distinguished rabbinical career; had he lived a hundred years earlier, he would in all likelihood have become a rabbi of renown of the traditional school, head of some celebrated *yeshibah*, and writer of pilpulistic works. As it was, however, his youth fell in the years when the opportunities of education in the universities were open to the Jews; from all portions of Germany eager Jewish youths flocked to the universities and drank eagerly at the springs of secular learning. The brilliant *bachur* of Kempen, one of whose dialectical feats had amazed the rabbinical authorities of the congregation when he was little more than a boy, was also seized with the desire to supplement his Hebrew knowledge with a university education; he made his way to the great institutions of higher academic learning at Prague and Berlin. Here he studied particularly philosophy and the humanities. True, he lacked orderly systematic early

preparation, but his sharp mentality enabled him to grasp the newer learning and to appreciate the wider outlook which it opened up before him. Thus equipped, combining the rabbinical learning of the Talmudical adept and the philosophical attainments of the university student, he entered upon his life's work. Many Jewish congregations of that day, often because the government had so decreed it, sought as their rabbis young men who had not only received the *Hattarath haraah* from some rabbinical worthy of acknowledged authority and standing, thus being declared capable of deciding questions of rabbinical law and performing rabbinical judicial functions, but who also in addition to this were able to preach in the vernacular, thus joining in their persons the old and the new, and standing in all truth, as did Aaron of old, between the quick and the dead. Holdheim began his active rabbinical career in this spirit in the congregation of Frankfort on the Oder; he had reached the age of thirty when he entered upon his office in this community and continued there four years. These years were weighty in the development of his religious ideas. True, he departed not one jot from traditional lines in the active administration of his office; he judged and decided all the ritual questions that came to him according to the norm and rule of the *shulchan arukh*. But in his preaching there is already discernible the seed of future growth. There is a tendency to impart a symbolical significance to ceremonial institutions. Now, as a matter of course, this was nothing new. Ibn Ezra and Maimonides had already done this. But the symboli-

zation of ceremony and custom is the germ of reform. The simon-pure orthodox believer performs a commanded ceremony or religious act simply because it is ordained; חוקה חקקתי וגזרה גזרת ואין אתם רשאים להרהר אחרי "thus it is commanded," is the only warrant which he requires; not for him to seek any hidden or symbolical significance which will in some way harmonize the ceremony or religious command with his intellectual outlook.

The incipiency of Holdheim's later career is thus discernible in the sermons of his Frankfort period, although of decided reform teaching there is as yet no trace. True, Samson Raphael Hirsch, the prophet of modern neo-orthodoxy may also be pointed to as pursuing a similar method of symbolization and therefore it may be claimed that there is no justification in considering this method as in any way leading to reform. With all due regard for Hirsch's exceptional gifts and achievements there is not the slightest doubt that the orthodox position is surrendered when the Maimonidean method of reading into ceremony and religious institutions an emblematic significance which is far other than the real intent is pursued. The rabbi of the Ezekial Landau and Salomon Tiktin type, who demanded the observance of rabbinical enactments simply as such without attempting to invest them with symbolical significance, is truly consistent. The symbolization of the ceremonies is inconsistent with this true orthodox ideal; when Holdheim carried his ideas further an reinterpreted the ceremonial laws according to the universalistic conception of Judaism, he was logical in

his development. Hirsch, who stopped short at symbolization, was illogical and was as little orthodox in the real sense as were the reformers upon whom he vented the vials of his wrath and scorn. Romantic obscurantism lacks both the absolutism of true orthodoxy and the free spirit of true liberalism. It is extremely interesting that the two men who are usually regarded as antipodes in Judaism in the Germany of the nineteenth century should have both at the beginning of their careers followed a similar method in the interpretation of ceremonies and institutions.

During his Frankfort period, Holdheim, as he never hesitated to acknowledge, was greatly influenced in the development of his religious ideas by the writings of Abraham Geiger. In 1835 Geiger began the publication of his *Zeitschrift fuer Wissenschaftliche Theologie*[2] which became the medium through which both the editor and like-minded religious leaders in Germany gave voice to the new thoughts which they were developing touching the real significance of Judaism, its forms, ceremonies and institutions. Geiger in one form and another was illustrating and proving the thesis that Judaism spelt development. In a number of articles which appeared in the *Zeitschrift* during the years which corresponded with Holdheim's incumbency of the Frankfort position, Geiger in broad lines set forth the needs, the possibilities and the hopes of the new Judaism. In the opening article of the first volume of the *Zeitschrift* entitled *Das*

[2] Six volumes of this learned magazine appeared at intervals from 1835-1847.

Judenthum Unserer Zeit und die Bestrebungen in ihm,[3] he mapped out the program of scientific investigation into the historical origin of forms and institutions and the necessity of their relinquishment or change if no longer productive of religious edification. In an article of similar import, *Neues Stadium des Kampfes in dem Judenthume unserer Zeit*[4] after graphically presenting the opposing tendencies which were warring in the Jewish camp, he made a strong plea for the right of free investigation into the origin and reasonableness of Jewish institutions and the consequent need of reform. Mention must also be made in this connection of the striking article *Der Formglauben in seinem Unwerthe und in seinen Folgen*;[5] in this essay Geiger stated without any qualification that "the validity (of religious ceremonies) can consist only in the fact that they are of living significance; this can be the case only if they answer local conditions and are suited to the contemporary state of culture. As soon as they no longer possess the power to fulfil such purpose and are retained nevertheless, nay, make even greater demands upon being observed inasmuch as they are no longer means to an end, but pretend to be an end in themselves, they have lost all value; bald formalism has in such instances usurped the place of free moral action and superstition has erected its throne." The philosophy of ceremony and ceremonialism can be expressed in brief phrase no more clearly. The religious situation

[3] *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift fuer Juedische Theologie* I, 1-12.
[4] Ibid II, 209-225.
[5] Ibid IV, 1-12.

in Judaism which was so vitally dependent upon the stand assumed towards the validity of ceremonies could not but be clarified by pronouncements as fearless and as far reaching as these.

These words penetrated into every portion of Germany and nowhere did they find more sympathetic reception than with the rabbi of Frankfort on the Oder. Geiger was Holdheim's guide in these early years in so far as he led the way, but Holdheim was too independent a spirit and too self-reliant a thinker to follow long where others led and in his literary productions and the practical performance of his official functions he soon gave evidence that a great power had arisen in the ranks of reform Judaism; from the year 1840 which witnessed the publication of Holdheim's pamphlet *Der religioese Fortschritt im deutschen Judenthume* called forth by the *cause celebre* in the German Jewish world, the strife engendered in the Breslau congregation by the election of Geiger as associate to Tiktin,[6] these two men, Samuel Holdheim and Abraham Geiger shone as the twin stars in the firmament of Jewish religious liberalism. Equally radical in theory, Holdheim was much more so in practice than his famous contemporary. Geiger held that as a student, the rabbi could give expression to any conclusions to which his researches might lead him, be they ever so radical; in practice, however, he must consider conditions and social forces and move slowly; hence in Geiger's rabbinical career he was much more conservative in practice than in theory; hence, too, he laid himself open frequently to the

[6] Philipson, The Reform Movement in Judaism, 72-101.

charge of inconsistency. Holdheim, on the other hand, carried his theories into practice and became as radical in the administration of his office as he was in the expression of his views. The difference in temperament between the two men also appeared from their attitude towards independent religious organizations in Judaism. When the Berlin reform congregation was organized as an independent congregation in 1845, cutting loose from the central Jewish community, Geiger refused the offer to become its religious leader because he believed in the solidarity of the community and had no desire to be the rabbi of a segment; after Holdheim's death when the same position was again tendered him, he refused on the same ground; Holdheim on the other hand, had no such scruples; he was by the whole trend of this thoughts and sympathies an out and out individualist and independent; he sympathized fully with the Berlin reformers who dissociated themselves from the central Jewish community and organized a separate congregation in order to have a free hand in carrying out their reforms, and he consented to become the rabbi of this independent, individual, radical congregation which stood altogether by itself, giving up the chief rabbinate of the province of Mecklenburg Schwerin with its official prestige and entering upon an unknown and untried course. In Geiger the sense of historical development was much stronger than in Holdheim; his practical program was to reform from within; Holdheim on the other hand did not hesitate at the boldest changes and a community like the Berlin Reform Congregation which was pre-

pared for the most violent departures from Jewish traditional practice was after his own heart. In brief, Holdheim was the arch-radical, Geiger the conservative reformer; Holdheim was impatient to have his theories realized in immediate practice, Geiger was content to move more slowly; Holdheim was the iconoclast without mercy, Geiger had a reverence for institutional life as it had developed historically. They represented two types of mind and each in his own way impressed the seal of his personality upon the religious thought of the generation in which they lived and toiled and had their being.

Holdheim moved rapidly in his religious progress; he was intense by nature, and threw himself heart and soul into any position he espoused;[7] he advanced by leaps and bounds; in 1836 when he assumed the rabbinical position in Frankfort on the Oder; he was as conservative in sentiment as any of the younger rabbis of the time; ten years later when he entered upon his office as rabbi of the Berlin reform congregation he was a radical of the radicals. That fifth decade of the nineteenth century was a very stirring time in Judaism; the leaven of new ideas was working; every day was making history; the Jewish communities, notably in the large cities like Berlin, Breslau, Hamburg, Frankfort on the Main were agitated from center to circumference by the excitements incident upon the growth and spread of liberal ideas. The Geiger Tiktin controversy, the Hamburg Temple Prayer Book incident, the Frankfort circumcision agitation,

[7] Ritter, *Die juedische Reformation*, Part III, *Samuel Holdheim*, 118.

the Brunswick, Frankfort and Breslau rabbinical conferences, the Berlin Reform Congregation episode kept German Jewry in a state of constant ferment and upheaval. In all this time Holdheim played a leading part. His pen was unceasingly active; year in, year out, he enriched the Jewish theological and controversial literature with the ripe deliverances of his well-stored mind. Not even by name can reference be made to all the essays, pamphlets and books that he produced. His leading ideas on the subjects which were particularly foremost, I shall attempt to reproduce in order to give as complete a picture as possible of the mental and religious outlook of this man who aroused the bitterest enmities and was unjustly denounced by the adherents of traditional Judaism as a reincarnated Paul of Tarsus.[8] Whatever he may or may not have been, he was certainly a Jew with all his heart and soul; he had no intention or purpose to undermine Judaism and replace it by another religion as did Paul; his interpretation of Judaism and its ceremonies may have been individual and too radical, but he rooted in Judaism; he never wished to be anything alse but a follower and teacher of Judaism and in the history of modern Judaism he must always be given, as he will always have, a foremost place.

The book which directed the attention of the Jewish religious world particularly to Holdheim and on which his fame largely rests to this day was his *Ueber die Autonomie der Rabbinen und das Prinzip der juedischen Ehe. Ein Beitrag zur Verstaendigung*

[8] Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden* XI, 565.

ueber einige das Judenthum betreffende Zeitfragen. (Schwerin, 1843). The direct occasion for the writing of this treatise lay in the fact that in the province of Mecklenburg Schwerin of which Holdheim was the chief rabbi, all matters involving marriage-and-inheritance-legislation among the Jews were decided by the rabbinical court according to the laws laid down in the Talmud and were not adjudicated by the regular courts of the land. This separate Jewish legislation which had been the order of things in all lands before the days of emancipation set off the Jews as a distinct community within the community. In a number of German states, the law-making bodies had declared that the Jews were subject to the same legislation as all the other inhabitants in all matters requiring legal adjudication. Holdheim desired to have this same step taken in Mecklenburg. At this time also the Prussian government was contemplating an Act of Incorporation for the Jews; by this the Jews were to be formed into separate communities of their own and be divided off from the remainder of the inhabitants. In this book Holdheim declared that the Jews did not desire separate nationality. The theses of his book were, first, that the law of the state in which the Jews lived must supersede the Mosaic-talmudical legislation and that the rabbi must therefore cease to exercise judicial functions; in the modern state the rabbi is not a legislator nor a judge; he must confine himself entirely to the religious province and his work will be all the more efficacious here inasmuch as he will be freed from performing all the extraneous judicial functions which belong primarily

and altogether to the state; secondly, the true interests of the Jews and Judaism demand the absolute separation of the religious and national or political elements; and thirdly, marriage according to Judaism is a purely civil act.

The distinguishing feature of this classic of reform Judaism is of course its clear and unmistakable pronouncement that the Jews are a religious community without political aims of their own, and that in all things except their religion they are of the state and people of whom they form a part. The separatistic Jewish legislation beneath whose dispensation the Jews had lived during the centuries of exclusion was a barrier for whose continued existence there was no justification. Three years previously, in 1840, Holdheim, after having attended a service in the then famous Hamburg Temple, had written that the great achievement of this reform congregation had been that it had repudiated all distinctive Jewish national hopes and had separated altogether the religious and national elements in Judaism. With this he was in full sympathy and his *Autonomie* is an elaboration of the correctness of this standpoint. "Only if the Jew surrenders all particularistic national conceptions, only if he believes that he can be true to the idea of Judaism as a religion in each and any fatherland wherever he may live, can he be truly attached to his fatherland. But if he entertains as a religious tenet and as a matter of conscientious conviction the belief that the Jewish state will again arise, then he can not possibly be in earnest in the matter of the separation of the religious and political elements and its implied

corollary of true loyalty to the fatherland."[9] In these words he expressed the gist of reform Judaism's teaching on this all important point of the relation to the state. From its very inception the new movement in Judaism has made a cardinal doctrine of this elimination of the nationalistic aspect; the teaching has been constantly accentuated that Judaism's mission is religious and not political and that the Jews have no national or political aims of their own but are part and parcel of the nations to which they belong by birth or adoption. This fundamental idea of reform so clearly set forth by Holdheim requires reiteration at this time for men's ideas in this matter are much confused today. We have been witnessing during the past decade the recrudescence of Jewish nationalism in the so-called Zionistic movement. Strange to say there are reformers who claim, in flat contradiction to the Holdheim thesis, that there is no call to separate the political element from Judaism and they attempt to reconcile the position of reform Judaism with the nationalistic or Zionistic position. Conditions among us today necessitate a brief consideration of this matter in the present connection and I will be pardoned, if after Talmudic precedent, I dwell upon this point by the way.

Reform Judaism and nationalism, or let me use the synonym for Jewish nationalism now in vogue, Zionism, are incompatible and irreconcilable. Reform Judaism is spiritual, Zionism is political; Reform Judaism is universal, Zionism is particularistic. Reform Judaism looks to the future, Zionism to the past; the

[9] *Autonomie der Rabbinen*, 53-54.

outlook of Reform Judaism is the world, the outlook of Zionism is a corner of Western Asia. Let there be no juggling with terms, as has grown fashionable of late; we hear of moral Zionism and cultural Zionism. Zionism is a distinctly political movement, as Israel Zangwill declared several years ago: "It (is) more than ever necessary to define Zionism clearly as a modern political movement, having for aim the re-establishment of Israel as a political entity, and incidentally the salvation of the masses of Russia and Roumania." No legerdemain of words here; no hazy talk of moral or cultural Zionism. "Having for aim the re-establishment of Israel as a political entity;" Mr. Zangwill deserves our thanks for this clear and unmistakable pronouncement. No words could state more decidedly the incompatibility of the aims of Zionism and Reform Judaism. For whatever else Reform Judaism may or may not be, it is *not* a political movement; and whatever else Zionism may or may not be, it *is* a political movement. Here truly is a parting of the ways. The same Mr. Zangwill once said that there were but two possible solutions of the Jewish question, "either a common country or a common idea;" Zionism represents the "common country" solution, Reform Judaism the "common idea." From the very beginning Reform Judaism was proclaimed a purely spiritual interpretation of Judaism; one of the first practical results of the agitation for reform was the elimination from the traditional liturgy of all prayers for the return to Palestine, the reinstitution of the Jewish State, and the re-establishment of the throne of David; this substitution of the

purely spiritual for the political mission has continued one of the main tenets of the reform movement, as it was so well summarized in the Declaration of Principles of the Pittsburg Conference: "We recognize in the modern era of universal culture of heart and intellect, the approaching of the realization of Israel's great Messianic hopes for the establishment of truth, justice and peace among all men. We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine nor a sacrificial worship under the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning a Jewish State." Let us have done then with all attempts at defending the thesis of the possibility of reconciling the attitude of Reform Judaism and Zionism; such attempts are the sheerest casuistry. Zionism means a surrender of the ideals for which Reform Judaism stands.

In his *Autonomie* and subsequent publications, Holdheim expressed his thoughts on the many matters involved in this fundamental conception of Judaism as a religious entity so fully that no one could be at a loss to know just where he stood. His views on the more important subjects may well occupy us as the significance of his career lies after all rather in the province of thought than action. The Talmud and its authority formed naturally the point of departure in all the points at issue between the reformers and the traditionalists. The tradition of the oral law as contained in the Talmud had unquestioned authority in Jewish life and practice. Holdheim himself at the beginning of his career had

accepted not only the dicta of the Talmud but also those of the later rabbis as decisive; soon he made a distinction between Talmudical deliverances and those of the later authorities, denying the binding validity of the latter; it was not long ere he came to the conclusion that the Talmud too has not divine sanction and that it was only a stage in the development of Judaism; the principle of tradition is a living principle and goes beyond the Talmud; traditions are contained in the Talmud, but the Talmud contains not all tradition; in the defense of his contention against the authority of the Talmud, he permitted himself to be carried to great lengths and was at times savagely bitter in his condemnation of Talmudical utterances, as were in fact many of the early reformers in the heat of conflict. As the years passed, Holdheim grew more and more clear in his expression as to the meaning of tradition; tradition is the testimony of history; traditions may be recorded but not tradition. This is the living principle of development. Not by set hermeneutic rules, as is the Talmudic procedure, is tradition to be deduced from the Bible, but by the unfolding purpose of God as revealed in the successive ages of the world, making more evident all the time the transiency of all that in the Bible is of a theocratic, particularistic, symbolic and political character and the permanence and eternity of purely religious and universal truths.

Similarly, in his conception of the function of the priesthood and of the election of Israel, he was guided by this same general distinction between the particularistic and the universal. The priesthood of a

special family, the Aaronides, was bound up with the theocratic conception of a Palestinian Judaism; this must give way under the universalistic interpretation to the idea of the priesthood of the community. Israel is the priest-people. But he went even further than this in his teaching concerning the election of Israel. In a study entitled *Volksgenossenschaft und Religionsgenossenschaft*[10] written in 1848, he gave voice to what must be considered the extreme lengths to which his thesis of universalism *versus* particularism carried him; in this essay he claimed that in the view of traditional Judaism, religion was law, that the Jew was bound to the law by his birth and that circumcision was the sign of the covenant, while reform teaches that Judaism is a matter of conviction and not of birth, of free moral conviction of the God-likeness of man and the covenant of love between God and man, whose conditions and consequences are the sanctification of the moral law. The moral law is the sanctifying element. Traditional Judaism naturally refuses to recognize as Jewish a religious community founded on this basis; in truth such a community does not demand that the orthodox consider it Jewish in their sense of the term, but it demands that the orthodox concede it the right to consider itself Jewish according to its conception, just as it concedes the same right to the orthodox although it believes that the orthodox persist in a conception of Judaism which it has outgrown. He contends further that the doctrine of the chosen people or the election of Israel is a political doctrine which

[10] *Israelit des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 1848, 161-4, 169-72.

lost its significance with the cessation of Israel's autonomous political existence; on the other hand, the covenant between God and man is a religious conception capable of unending development; "in accordance with this principle we have only to set aside the barrier which limits the relation between God and man to the israelitish tribe and extend this relation to all mankind in order to see the theocracy expand into a universal religion of humanity, the tribe change into a religious community and the reform of Judaism completed in principle. Nothing further is needed if the power of development of the God-idea, the moral idea of Judaism, is granted. But the God-idea is obscured if it be assumed that God turned in love to one tribe exclusively and cast off all other peoples in a step-fatherly manner. The moral idea loses its true worth if it is confined narrow-mindedly to the members of one tribe." In other words the relation of man to God is the absolute religious relation, hence eternal; that of a chosen people to God, the relative religious conception, hence temporary, however, "the divine covenant with Israel still obtains inasmuch as this people is still called to preserve for mankind the monotheistic belief in its purity together with the holy moral law, until such time as Israel shall become a blessing to all mankind when it will lose its particularity in the messianic era."

If, as Holdheim contends, here and everywhere all stress must be laid upon the religious and universal element, the question of the validity of religious principles or dogmas becomes of supreme importance. In the conception of rabbinical Judaism wherein

most weight is laid on practice, the chief word is "thou shalt do," or "thou shalt not do" (עשה and לא תעשה) rather than "thou shalt believe." In a famous passage Moses Mendelssohn had declared that Judaism is only ceremonial legislation and has no dogmas; he had also stated that this ceremonial legislation having been revealed by God has validity until there shall be a second revelation as clear as the first abrogating it. In reference to the latter point, Holdheim had declared in a remarkable article "*Unsere Gegenwart*"[11] that God reveals himself in history and when in this progressive revelation of God it appears that the ceremonial legislation has lost religious validity and its abrogation becomes necessary for the furtherance of the true religious spirit, God has so commanded it. As for the other contention that Judaism has no dogmas, he took direct issue with Mendelssohn.[12] True, Judaism has no creed which man must blindly accept even though against reason, but it has religious doctrines or dogmas which reason must freely acquiesce in. When in 1850 the Berlin Reform Congregation of which Holdheim was rabbi, requested to be incorporated by the government, the petition was refused on the ground that the congregation required no confession of faith, and the state could not recognize officially any religious body that had no positive confession of faith. When this answer was returned a

[11]Freund's *Zur Judenfrage in Deutschland*, II, 149-171, 231-258, 315-340.

[12]*Moses Mendelssohn und die Denk-und Glaubensfreiheit im Judenthume* (Berlin 1859).

most spirited and interesting debate took place at the meeting of the directorate of the congregation on the point as to whether Judaism has a fixed creed or not.[13] The "lay" members held that the government officials should be informed that the request for a confession of faith could not be complied with since Judaism lacks this. One of them (Dr. Bressler) stated that "the positing of principles is altogether unjewish. Formerly he too had considered this necessary, but he had seen the error of this view and had repudiated it." Another (Dr. Stern) declared that "the fixed definition of principles contradicts entirely the idea of development which lies at the very basis of our reform." Stern was empowered to frame an answer to the government along these lines. Holdheim took issue with the "lay" members on this point. He held that the belief in definite principles did not exclude the idea of development and that "our reform touches only the dead forms of Judaism but not its inner essence and the content of the faith." Holdheim was as much opposed as any of the laymen to the acceptance of a fixed creed as a condition of salvation.[14] This is the Christian, not the Jewish point of view, and therefore the Christian officials took the attitude they did. The point in which Holdheim differed with the laymen was that principles were absolutely necessary of statement and that Judaism having such principles, they could, should and must be stated;

[13]Holdheim, *Geschichte der Juedischen Reformgemeinde in Berlin*, 229-30, (Berlin, 1857),

[14]See paragraph 2 of his *Religionsprincipien des reformierten Judenthums*, Berlin, 1847.

there is a wide difference between a creed as a fixed and necessary condition of salvation and a declaration of principles.

The principles of Judaism as he conceived them Holdheim elaborated in his treatise entitled *Die Religionsprinzipien des reformierten Judenthums* (Berlin, 1847), which contains his system of theology. The treatise consists of seven sections whereof the first serves as an introduction setting forth the historical development of the necessity of a reform of Judaism within German Jewry. The belief in the one eternal and holy God with all the appertaining attributes has always been the fundamental principle of Judaism and the Bible its norm of faith. The religious life among the Jews in post-Biblical times was the product of a definite system of Biblical interpretation, viz: the Talmudical, which, as is well known, is casuistical. If the belief in the tradition and in the correctness of this method of interpretation is no longer held, the hope for the restoration of the Mosaic sacrificial system and its rites, as well as of the agrarian, levitical and the majority of the laws of purity is repudiated. Then the break with the whole theory of Talmudic Judaism has become unavoidable and the need for a new interpretation of the Bible and consequent religious practice has arisen. What demands then does Judaism, bearing in mind its whole development from the beginning, make upon its followers of the present time of whom this is true? After showing how the Talmudic interpretation of the Bible was really a development beyond the Biblical content, thus establishing the principle of positive

historical development, he proceeds with the declaration that the Reform Congregation accepts this principle with the reservation, however, that it acknowledges as positive fundamental principles only the spiritually potent ideas of truth and morality which underlie Biblical Judaism and which have been developed by the history of mankind at large and the Jews in particular. In the next section which is taken up with the discussion of the justification and the need to lay down the fundamental principles of Judaism at the present time he shows why this has been neglected thus far. In Talmudic and rabbinic Judaism greatest stress was laid upon observance, hence, no necessity was felt for a formulation of belief. The Reform Congregation rejects the principle of externality and accepts as alone justified that of inner conviction; only the conviction of the validity of the truths of Judaism, of religious sentiment and the moral acts flowing from this have absolute value; on the other hand, the forms which bring these truths home to men, which arouse religious feeling, encourage moral conduct and result in spiritual companionship have only relative value. Hence, he only is to be considered a Jew who makes free confession of the truths of Judaism and testifies to his realization of their significance by corresponding deeds of morality. In the next section he declares that the source of Judaism whence its religious principles are to be derived, is its history which shows how Judaism gradually develops in the life of the Jewish people. The remainder of the treatise is devoted to explaining his views on such points as circumcision, the Sabbath,

the relation to the state, the chosen people idea, Talmud and tradition, the holidays and public worship. As some of these subjects have been already discussed and others will be touched upon shortly, it is not necessary to dwell upon them now. This booklet on the religious principles of reform Judaism is Holdheim's confession of faith and presents in full his views on all the controverted subjects which agitated the Jewish communities of Germany during these birth years of the reform movement. None of the reform leaders with the exception of Hess of Weimar, the editor of the organ of radical reform *Der Israelit des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts,* shared Holdheim's extreme views, notably when it came to carrying them into practice. How absolutely Holdheim and his congregation had broken with accepted Jewish tradition appeared notably in the attitude on the Sabbath, circumcision and marriage questions. From 1849 the congregation worshipped on Sunday only. Circumcision was declared non-essential and intermarriages were celebrated. Circumcision and marriage among Jews only Holdheim considered as symbols of the theocratic, national particularistic conception of Judaism and therefore not binding when this interpretation had been surrendered. As much interest naturally attaches to these practical outcomes of his theories I shall let him speak for himself by reproducing his answers to a questionnaire addressed to him in 1848 by a reform society in Arad, Hungary. Here the ideas which he elaborated at great length in his many writings will be found succinctly stated.

The radical reform movement took quite a hold on a number of Hungarian Jews in the fourth decade of the nineteenth century. Chiefly through the influence of Aaron Chorin, one of the very earliest reform rabbis, the Jewish community of Arad had led the way in liberal religious thought among the Hungarian congregations. In 1848 some Jews in this community desired to organize a congregation of the type of the Berlin reform congregation and requested from Holdheim answers to a series of questions; his answers to these questions are the clearest statement of his position in brief form that I know. The questions touched the following points:

1. The transfer of the Sabbath to Sunday. 2. The abolition of the dietary laws. 3. The observance of the second days of the holidays. 4. A short service in a living language together with the abrogation of all marks of distinctiveness and the covering of the head. 5. The declaration that circumcision is not absolutely required of Israelites; and finally, the definite declaration that only the ten commandments are binding as the revelation of God to Moses; therefore the Talmud and all religious observances both such as are contained in the Bible and such as were introduced in earlier days, fall away.[15]

These questions go to the very heart of Jewish practice; they give evidence, too, of the fact that these radicals did not comprehend the basic principles of the reform movement; by repudiating the whole Jewish tradition, they cut themselves loose from the house of Israel; by accepting only the Ten Commandments

[15] *Israelit des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 1848, 164-5.

they out-karaited the Karaites; all the great reformers insisted upon the validity of the principle of tradition, however many special traditions they may have repudiated; otherwise they would have cut the cord that bound them to the century-long religious experience and development of Israel; they taught that reform was an interpretation and application of the principle of tradition in the light of the changed conditions of the nineteenth century, just as the *Schulchan Arukh* was such an interpretation and application in the light of the conditions of former centuries. For them the whole history of Judaism was eloquent with the searching after God and they saw the revelation of God not only in the Ten Commandments but in the whole long unfolding and growth of the spirit of man through historical time. However much the great leaders may have differed on some points, in this they were all agreed, even Holdheim. In his answer to the Arad questionnaire he explained this and other points so clearly and concisely that it appears necessary to set down here his words:

A. "To the question whether the observance of the ten commandments alone is sufficient for the israelitish confession, I answer:

1. The definite God-cognition and moral content of Judaism as they are expressed briefly and sharply in the Ten Commandments, as they are more fully explained and developed in the whole Bible, the post Biblical writings and particularly in the whole history of Judaism, together with the historical mission of Judaism compose the exclusive, unchangeable foundation and the essential and only binding principles of

Judaism; this mission means the preservation in all its purity of this God-cognition and this body of moral doctrine founding on justice and universal brotherly love and the promulgation thereof among men by the moral force of example, so that in accordance with the prophetical messianic idea, justice and brotherhood may become dominant in all the earth.

2. Now that the Jews have become integral elements of other peoples and states in conjunction with whom they are determined to further the moral aims of society, all laws and institutions of Judaism which base upon the election of a particular Jewish people, yes, of a particular Jewish state, and hence by their very nature imply exclusiveness and particularism, and serve merely to strengthen the nationalistic sentiment prevalent among all ancient peoples, have lost all religious significance and obligation and have given way to the national laws and institutions of such lands and peoples to which the Jews belong by birth and civic relationship. As an example of such a political law of the Jewish Palestinian state I instance the prohibition to take interest from the native and the permission to take such interest from foreigners (Deut. xxiii, 20-21.)

3. All laws which deal with the temple, and the sacrificial, the priestly or the Levitical service, in which category also the many dietary laws as well as the laws of clean and unclean belong, in a word, all laws which grew out of the idea of a particular theocratical sanctity of the Jewish people and were based upon the conception of a particular union between God and Israel, the chosen people of God, and closer

than that with other peoples, have lost their religious truth and significance for us, now that these representations have become foreign to our whole mode of thought and we look upon God as the one and only Father, and consider and love all men as His children and our brethren.

4. All other ceremonies and customs—whether contained in the Bible or the product of later ages—which at one time had and fulfilled the purpose of nourishing the religio-moral sentiment but have lost all such power owing to the complete change in the position and culture of men and have for this reason sunk into mere external forms, can and may not be performed by us any longer as religious practices. We must rather strive earnestly for inner religiosity and not outer formalism in accordance with the words of the prophet Hosea (vi. 6) "I desire loving kindness and not sacrifice;" we must use only such ceremonies as are efficacious as a religious influence upon men of the present day.

B. The special questions, notably:

1. That touching the transfer of Saturday to Sunday I answer thus: Since we cannot assume that God pronounced one particular day holy once for all and since we consider the Biblical account of the exclusive sanctification of a special day merely as the mythical expression for the sanctification of man on a special day, naturally no religious reason prevents the transfer of the historical Sabbath to any other day of the week, notably if such transfer is urgently demanded by the conditions of civic life, yea, even in the interest of the preservation of the Sabbath-

institution and its influence on the religious life of the congregation, hence in the interest of religion itself.

2. As I have demonstrated scientifically elsewhere, the dietary laws belong to the Biblical laws of cleanliness which have long since lost all significance. Inasmuch as the dietary laws were given to the Israelites alone, they are part and parcel of the conception of a special theocratical sanctity of the Jewish people, and therefore have lost all significance. Whatever, however, may have once been the reason for the dietary laws, this much is certain, that this reason no longer exists for us, and has no religious efficacy; every irrational practice, every belief in talismanic power is opposed to the spirit of religion. Therefore the abrogation of the dietary laws is highly desirable since in addition to being a disturbing feature in the civic and social life of the Jews, these laws are particularly prone to continue the differences between them and other people.

3. The abolition of the second days of the holidays as well as the abrogation of all fast days except יום כפור has been recommended by the German rabbinical conferences. To my mind not only is there no objection to such abolition but it is highly desirable in the interest of our religion.

4. The abbreviation of the service, the excision of all prayers unsuited to our age as e. g. the sacrificial and messianic prayers of a Jewish national character as well as the use of the vernacular in the public service have also been recommended by the second rabbinical conference. The removal of all disturbing

ceremonials has taken place in very many Jewish congregations in Germany, and not even from the orthodox standpoint can any objection be raised to praying with uncovered head.

5. Circumcision is the sign of the covenant concluded between God and Abraham, and *eo ipso* his descendants (from which however, the older lines of Ishmael and Esau are excluded) and its seal on the body of every Israelite. As long as such a covenant had significance for the religious consciousness of the Jews, as long as the idea of a close special covenant of love excluding the nations (upon which the whole theocratic relationship was based) was deeply rooted in the people's thought, circumcision was the characteristic symbol of this covenant and was therefore clung to with particular zeal in Israel. But after this idea of the particular covenant which underlies circumcision has ceased to be a religious truth and an object of faith protest must be lodged against circumcision, the expression of an outlived idea. It testifies to something which is not true, yes, to something which is in fact denied by all Israelites who have become self-conscious. The Jew today believes by no manner of means that he through the accident of descent from Abraham stands in a close special relationship to God and that he is obligated to give visible evidence of this closer relationship by a sign in the flesh. I am opposed to circumcision on principle and declare every Jew, who confides in my religious insight and conscientiousness, to be absolved from all obligation in this matter. Yes, I declare every Jew who neglects to have his son circumcised because of his larger belief

to be a true and complete Jew. Finally, I declare righteousness in the fullest sense of the term, i. e. equality for all men, humanity and brotherhood together with the living stirring zeal to realize these things in all circles of life to be the practical realization of the God-cognition of Judaism and hence the true and pure Judaism."

After this exposition of Holdheim's theology a word must be said about the sermons which he delivered during his incumbency of the Berlin pulpit. The four volumes containing them are a treasure trove of Jewish thought. The words palpitate with warm Jewish feeling. Whoever reads them must grant that this preacher was imbued with true Jewish sentiment, that he was a thinker treading the very heights of humanity, and a scholar who had drunk very deeply at the sources of Jewish learning. Whether one agree or differ with his theology and his interpretation of Jewish tradition, there can not be the shadow of a doubt that this extreme radical among the reformers was as sincere in his conviction of the fundamental truths of Judaism as was the most uncompromising adherent to the codes. From here, there and everywhere in these sermons, glowing periods can be cited which evidence the depth of his conviction of Judaism's truth and Israel's great service to humanity. We will have to content ourselves with an extract taken from the sermon on "Our Priestly Mission," a panegyric on Israel's devotion and a call to the Jews of the present to be faithful to the obligations resting on them: "There is no people that has suffered so much for the truth or endured so much

in the name of loyalty as have the Jews; there is no people so deserving of the title of a priest people by merit of two thousand years of sacrifice and self-denial as are the Jews. Israel was called to plant the faith in the hearts of the nations. But which is the seed-corn that planted in the bosom of the earth, produces the living tree of religion? Truly אין אמר בלי נישמע ואין דברים it is neither speech nor words, קולם whose sound soon disappears and dies away; nay בכל הארץ יצא קלם, through all the earth the bloody seed is scattered, ובקצה תבל מליהם to the end of the world the agonized cry of the martyrs penetrates! This method of teaching and of witnessing to the faith is more efficacious than that whereby the followers of other religions seek to spread their faith. If hundreds of thousands of families, men and women, hoary heads, youths and maidens ascended the flaming funeral pyre and breathed their last with the *Sh'ma Yisrael* upon their lips, this is a more telling manner of teaching and proclaiming one's faith than to preach from pulpits, in the streets or from the house tops and to portray the strength of faith in weak sounding words. If other hundreds of thousands were chased into misery and destruction, still others cast into the waves or sold as slaves, if multitudes died of hunger and the remnant that was rescued brought nothing into strange lands but purity of conscience, faithfulness of soul and innocence of heart, surely they have secured thereby the right to call themselves the bearers of pure faith for humanity. Humanity which sinned so sorely against Israel, may indeed grant Israel the distinction and the glory to

still call itself a kingdom of priests and a holy people. The old priests had atoned for the sins of men by offering sacrifices which they burnt on the altar; the new priests have atoned for the sins of humanity inasmuch as they immolated themselves as sacrifices on the altar of faith, fealty and conviction. Israel has not sent out any missionaries to carry its faith to mankind. But what need had it of missionaries when it itself went to the nations as the messenger of the Lord of Hosts, and engraved its belief on the stony hearts of men with the stylus dipped in its own heart's blood. Israel required no Messiah in the generally accepted sense of the word because it itself suffered and agonized for its faith, because it itself died for its faith and was resurrected time and again.

Thus has Israel been true to its priestly mission in perilous days when no other manner of teaching was allowed it. This period of probation has passed but our mission is not yet over. Still must we in as far as it is our duty to be disciples of Aaron, אוהב את הבריות ומקרבן לתורה, love men and bring them nigh to pure religion but also אוהב שלום ורודף שלום love peace and preserve peace."

The man who could speak thus passionately of Israel's service through the centuries of martyrdom and had such a conception of Israel's priestly mission was in all truth a worthy proclaimer of God's word to the world, aye was deserving of being termed a "great master in Israel, ... the lion in the struggle for light and truth" as David Einhorn, that other great reformer, who knew him and his work so well designated him.

The forty-six years which have elapsed since Holdheim's death have smoothed away many of the animosities and bitternesses which were engendered during his lifetime. To the scathing and denunciatory estimates formed of the radical by his contemporaneous opponents of the conservative wing, notably Frankel and Sachs, I refer only in passing but more than a word must be devoted to condemnation of the unjustifiable treatment of the whole reform movement and notably of Holdheim in the work which is accepted as the authoritative history of the Jews, Graetz' *magnum opus*. Graetz writes here not as a historian, but as a bitter partisan; he had no appreciation and no understanding whatsoever of the true significance of the reform movement; his account is not history but polemics; it is a misfortune that this portion of the eleventh volume was ever written; no man who was in the thick of the contest and was as decided an opponent as was Graetz is able to present a fair account; Graetz has given us a party pamphlet, not an impartial estimate. Whatever faults and shortcomings Holdheim had there can be no manner of doubt that he was thoroughly honest in his convictions; he was led from step to step in his radical's progress by the conception he formed of Judaism's place in the world as a universal religion. The serious mistake which he made was that he was guided altogether by intellectual forms and took not sufficient note of historical forces and social determinants. No religion, Judaism or any other, is simply a philosophical discipline; the forces which have been at work in shaping the ex-

pression that a religion takes must enter largely into the reformer's workshop. No reformer can begin *de novo*; he is not a creator, he is not God; he must work with the material in hand; true, he must remove abuses which have sprung up in the course of time, he must necessarily destroy, but much more, he must re-interpret, re-adapt, re-construct. The prophet was sent not only לנתוש ולנתוץ "to root out, to pull down and to destroy," but also לבנות ולנטוע "to plant and to build." Holdheim who was all intellect had little patience with anything that conflicted with his intellectual conclusions; his system of theology gave not sufficient place to the historical element of Jewish development; in his broad conception of the principle of tradition he disregarded too much special traditions and ceremonies that still might have had and did have potency and power. He proceeded from an "absolute" instead of a "relative" point of view. In one way he saw too clearly, impatiently brushing away everything that obstructed his vision, in another he was short-sighted in that he failed to appreciate that religion, and notably the Jewish religion, is a life, the century-old experience of a community which developed along particular lines. Reform can not proceed according to a program as iconoclastic as Holdheim's; not only the intellect must be reckoned with, but also the historical consciousness of the people; not only the spirit of the age must be considered but also the genius of Israel. This explains in chief part why the Berlin Congregation which translated Holdheim's interpretation of Judaism into practice remained so isolated a phenomenon in the life of

German Jewry. In the last instance, however, it must be granted that Holdheim did much (and this is his chief merit) to present clearly the fundamental teachings of Judaism in their spiritual aspect; universalism is his reading of Judaism's mission; his dictum is that the revelation of God is continuous, history being the medium of that revelation; to the latest as well as to early generations, God unfolds his purposes; with the enunciation of this great and inspiring doctrine Samuel Holdheim's name will ever be associated; by written and spoken word, in sermon and in life he preached to his own and to future generations, as did the great American poet,

"God is not dumb that he should speak no more;
If thou hast wanderings in the wilderness
And find'st not Sinai, 'tis thy soul is poor;
There towers the mountain of the Voice, no less,
Which whoso seeks shall find, but he who bends
Intent on manna still and mortal ends,
Sees it not, neither hears its thundered lore.
Slowly the Bible of the race is writ,
And not on paper leaves or leaves of stone;
Each age, each kindred, adds a verse to it,
Texts of despair, of joy or moan.
While swings the sea, while mists the mountains shroud,
While thunder's surges burst on cliffs of cloud,
Still at the prophets' feet the nations sit."

ABRAHAM GEIGER.*

(1810-1910).

ABRAHAM GEIGER, who combined to a degree as did few others of his generation the mastery of Jewish lore with secular learning, was peculiarly fitted to become a leader of that movement in Judaism which applying the touchstone of development to the traditions of the past was to interpret the eternal message of Judaism in a manner consonant with the spirit of modernity. His was primarily the historical temper. By a thorough study of the past he became convinced that there had always been a developing force in Judaism; this may have been in abeyance at times but to him there could be no doubt that Judaism spelt development and that Judaism's history and literature if studied and correctly grasped yielded irrefutable proofs of the truth of this statement. He felt that a time had come in the life of the Jewish people when a new interpretation of the eternal values of Judaism was imperative but he would have this interpretation evolutionary and not revolutionary.[1] The tree of Juda-

*Centenary address at meeting of Central Conference of American Rabbis, July 1, 1910.

[1] Wenn auf irgend einen Gebiete so ist naemlich auf dem religioesen das Verfahren der Reform allein segenbringend, die Revolution nur geeignet, allen Lebenskraften ein gefaehrliches Siechthum beizubringen. *Nachgelassene Schriften* I. 205. See also Ibid. V., 196, 202, and J. Z. W. L. VI., 4.

ism, rooted in the far past, still had life force sufficient to send forth new branches. The movement for reform as he conceived it was not to be a break with the past.[2] From the very moment that he entered upon the active practice of the rabbinical profession in Wiesbaden he committed himself without reserve to the advocacy of the reform movement.[3] In a letter written in 1836 to his friend, M. A. Stern, the celebrated mathematician, he declared that "not emancipation but reform was the leading issue of the day for the Jews."[4] He never faltered in this faith; he wanted a living Judaism, not a religion that was a mere survival of a vanished past. In a hundred and one forms he expressed himself to this effect; "we want bread for our hunger," he wrote passionately, "water for our thirst; the spirit ought to receive fresh powerful nourishment and we are being trifled with and flowers are given us and that too of doubtful fragrance; we want a faith that satisfies the spirit and inspires us to accomplish deeds for the present day and they rear us to be men who dream only of the past; we want a love that bears fruit and they feed us on effeminate piety and weak, heartless sentimentality. An interest in the past arises only from a living present; if Judaism were to manifest itself as a living force in us, we would know that this force must have been creative at all times and we would notice attentively the results of this

[2] Juedische Zeitschrift fuer Wissenschaft und Leben, V., 251.

[3] Letter to Salomon Geiger of date April 19, 1833, *Nachgelassene Schriften* V. 80.

[4] Ibid., p. 89.

creative force."[5] Ever and all the time this is the burden of his thought. Reform is a link in the chain of Judaism's development;[6] it is vain to retain such institutions and doctrines as are moribund, "whatever the spirit of history in which God reveals himself, has removed and buried no human skill can resuscitate and revivify."[7] This is one of Geiger's most illuminating thoughts; God reveals himself constantly in the course of history; if men have ears to hear and eyes to see, they will grasp the constantly-appearing revelation; past, present and future are indissolubly connected; we must gain knowledge and insight from the experiences of past generations but we must live in the present and toil intelligently for the future.[8] Fealty to Judaism does not demand a blind adherence to the past without regard to the requirements of the living present. True, there is a spirit of Jewish tradition which the ages have been producing; this spirit of tradition has expressed itself in thousands of separate traditions which we term customs, ceremonies and forms; these separate traditions arise and pass; the developing spirit brings forth many different traditions in varied ages and places. To cling to past traditions merely because at some time or other the spirit of Judaism has produced them, is to indulge in a hazy romanticism which prefers the

[5] *Israelit des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, VII. (1846) 7.

[6] *Nachgelassene Schriften*, V. 147. Ibid., I. 204.

[7] Ibid., V. 190.

[8] Aus der Vergangenheit schoepfen, in der Gegenwart leben, fuer die Zukunft wirken;" motto accompanying Geiger's picture 1857, *Nachgelassene Schriften* V. 279.

dim light of the vanished past to the bright day of the glowing present.

Geiger had no patience with this romantic attitude. He visited it with all the scorn at his command. He felt that it was an undue exaltation of the past at the expense of the present and that it gave evidence of an unhealthy state of mind.[9] His was a peculiarly sane temperament. He was not a blind worshipper of the past, neither was he a ruthless iconoclast. He was neither reactionary nor radical, neither romanticist nor ultra-modernist. He was in the best sense of the word a reformer, who felt that the present can continue all that is fine and worthy in the past by presenting the everlasting truth of Judaism in a form which attracts the contemporary generation. In a dissertation on the reform of the ritual he set this forth very clearly, "Every reform," he wrote, "is a transition from the past into a regenerated future; such reform does not break with the past but rather preserves carefully the bond which connects the present with the past; it not only continues the once living spirit in new vital forms, thereby strengthening this spirit anew, but it retains all the charming attachment to that which has grown precious and dear in the religious life. Such reform proceeds not with inexorable logic, it follows the law of historical development."[10] In his view reform was simply the latest stage in the process of Jewish development. He differed radically with the traditionalists who

[9] *Nachgelassene Schriften*, V. 88. Juedische Zeitschrift fuer Wissenschaft und Leben, VI., 20.

[10] *Unser Gottesaienst* in J. Z. W. L. VI. (1868) 4.

claimed that every expression in the Talmud and the codes was authoritative; he would not concede that the possibilities of Judaism had become exhausted with the work of the Talmudical doctors; all ages present and to come had their contribution to make to the religion no less than the ages agone. If the traditionalists were right in their position that all tradition was in the Talmud, then in all the centuries which have elapsed since the close of the Talmud, Judaism has been only a lingering survival and has been merely feeding on the products of a vanished past. Inasmuch as they looked upon Judaism as having slept during all this time they have no right to speak of a tradition three thousand years old. But whatever the traditionalists may claim there could be no doubt of the fact that in the conflicts and tendencies of the modern age the spirit of Judaism was reasserting itself in a new way and God was revealing himself in a new manner.[11]

Through the expression of such views Geiger and his sympathizers naturally aroused the bitter antagonism of the rabbis of the old school and their followers. For these Judaism was a closed chapter. The teachings and observances of the religion as

[11] Man duerfe nicht von einer drei Tausend jaehrigen Tradition sprechen wenn man sie als bereits fast zwei tausend Jahre entchlafen betrachte. Der Faden der Tradition sei in der Gegenwart gerade wieder angeknuepft. Das in gesetzliche Erstarrung gerathene religioese Bewusstsein der Gesammtheit habe seit laengerer Zeit begonnen fluessig zu werden, wieder sei eine lebendige Anschauung erwacht, wenn sie auch noch nicht zur vollen Klarheit sich entwickelt habe. See *Protokolle der dritten Versammlung deutscher Rabbiner*, 160.

codified in the *Schulchan Arukh* were to be accepted and carried out without question. The reformers on the other hand contended for the freedom of research and investigation into each and any religious institution or tradition. This antagonism reached an acute stage when Geiger was elected rabbi of the Breslau congregation in 1838. Solomon Tiktin who had been rabbi of the congregation for many years refused to recognize Geiger as an associate. This aged rabbi could not understand that a new generation had arisen which demanded a reformulation of Jewish values. He contended that freedom of research as required by the advocates of what was known as the *Wissenschaft des Judenthums* was intolerable. The rabbi had simply to conduct his office along traditional lines; it was not his concern to ask concerning or inquire into the reason of religious ceremony or custom; he had only to decide according to the dicta of tradition as formulated in the code. The refusal of Tiktin to recognize Geiger as his associate in the performance of the functions of the rabbinical office led the board of directors of the congregation, in their desire to solve the difficulties of the situation to suggest that Geiger be designated the preacher of the congregation while Tiktin continued to be known as the rabbi. This suggestion was tantamount to recognizing an old and a new Judaism, the old embodied in strict rabbinism as represented by Tiktin, the new spelling modernism as appearing in Geiger, a young man of modern training. Geiger refused to lend himself to such a compomise; he contended that if the new conditions in Jewry demanded men of

modern training in the rabbinical office, then it was intolerable to refuse to such men the recognition of rabbinical authority. The threatening break between the old and new could be healed only if the people had before them in the activity of the rabbi-preacher the demonstration of the possibility of the joining of the spirit of tradition with the spirit of the modern age.

Tiktin continuing in his recalcitrant attitude, the board of directors found themselves compelled to suspend him from office. The aged rabbi now addressed a number of his colleagues on the subject in dispute and published their opinions in a pamphlet.[12] These rabbis declared unreservedly for the absolute and eternal authority of all Talmudical legislation, as "binding for all time upon the Jews and not one of these commandments or prohibitions, be its character what it may, can ever be abolished or modified by any human authority."

Fortified by these unequivocal declarations, Tiktin charged the board of directors with malfeasance in office for having selected as rabbi a man "who in spoken and written discourse denies unreservedly the authoritative validity of traditional Judaism and whose call and mission appears to be to extirpate it root and branch for all time."

Thus challenged, the board of directors in their turn addressed a cummunication to a number of the leading rabbis of Europe requesting their opinion on the compatibility of free research with the per-

[12] *Darstellung des Sachverhaeltnisses in seiner hiesigen Rabbinatsangelegenheit.*

formance of the functions involved in the conduct of the rabbinical office. The seventeen answers received were published in two volumes.[13] These volumes were the most important publications which had appeared up to that time touching the controversies engendered by the liberal religious tendencies among Jews; these rabbis[14] all endorsed the position of Geiger in the premises. This collection of opinions is notable inasmuch as the new situation is viewed from many angles by men of profound learning and clear vision.

The Geiger-Tiktin affair served a useful end inasmuch as it called forth a clear expression of the pros and cons of the situation. But perhaps the chief gain lay in the fact that the responses of the seventeen rabbis gave evidence of the fact that they like Geiger were convinced that the new valuation of Judaism involved no break with the past but a re-interpretation of the finest spiritual products of that past in the light of the greatly changed outlook of Jewish life in the present.

Geiger then, and those of his contemporaries who sympathized with him rested their reforms on a historical basis. He viewed the whole course of the development of the Jewish religion from the very beginning. He recognized the increasing purpose running through the ages. The deliverance from Egypt, the wandering in the wilderness, the entrance into and the life in Palestine, the preaching of the

[13] *Rabbinische Gutachten ueber die Vertraeglichkeit der freien Forschung mit dem Rabbineramte,* (Breslau 1844).

[14] For a detailed account see Philipson *The Reform Movement in Judaism,* 72-101.

prophets, the Babylonian exile, the second Palestinian commonwealth, the dispersion in Greek speaking lands before the Christian era, the destruction of Jerusalem with the consequent settling of Jews in all parts of the civilized world, the harrowing experiences in the centuries of persecution, the emancipation of the modern age, all these phases in the century-long travail of the Jewish people with their accompanying spiritual uplift or depression, were parts of one connected whole; each age produced its own characteristic tendency and so, too, the modern age was signalized by the reform movement, the latest link in this chain of development. Geiger saw the story of Judaism clearly and he saw it whole. How clearly appears from many a passage in his writings one of which may be reproduced as indicative of all the rest: "How Judaism arose and gradually assumed the Biblical form, how the various movements within it whose individuality we still recognize, adjusted themselves to one another, how from the same moving forces the law as developed in the Talmudical discussions gradually emerged to the forefront, how finally the mediaeval age spent itself often meritoriously but with only meager results in commenting upon and expounding this Talmudical legislation, how the mission of the present is to redeem the spirit from these petrified forms and thus to introduce Judaism into the thick of human activity as a life giving, spiritual and religious force; this is a world mission, for which the present age seeks its organs and will find them. . . Let us honor worthily the great names which have become historical, let us honor their memory; but then courageously forward, new aims before us! Let

not the mouldy smell of the past as it arises from graves benumb us, but let the energizing breath of the atmosphere of the future be wafted toward us."[15]

At the very outset of his career Geiger indicated the method which he intended to pursue in his work of reform. Fully convinced even then of the necessity of building the structure of the reform movement on a historical and scientific basis in order to demonstrate its place in the development of Jewish religious effort and aspiration, he took steps towards this end. With his keen historical sense, his wide learning and his philosophical grasp he understood the meaning of the larger forces at work in his generation, and recognized that the liberation of thought apparent everywhere was affecting the Jews also and hence Judaism both in the outer form which it had assumed during its centuried existence and in its inner content must be interpreted in accordance with the new outlook of the modern age. This re-interpretation must rest upon a Jewish foundation. The Jewish past must be viewed from a new angle of vision. The volumes of Jewish lore must be studied in the light of the conditions of the times and places in which they had been written. The forces at work in Jewish life must be learned from the literary monuments that had survived from days past. This systematic study of the productions of the Jewish spirit was called the Science of Judaism.[16]

[15] *Kley und Rapoport, Juedische Zeitschrift fuer Wissenschaft und Leben*, V. 251.

[16] The term Science of Judaism which for want of a better we are compelled to use must be understood in the original and larger meaning of the term "science" as "knowledge," and not in the restricted sense which it now usually has of "natural science."

(*Die Wissenschaft des Judenthums*). This was the first article of Geiger's program, namely to demonstrate by the study of Jewish sources, the development and growth of Jewish institutions and by thus demonstrating the fact of such development and growth to secure the justification for the reform movement and ensure its place as the latest phase in the development of Judaism.[17] It is true that this had been the thought of that band of young men, chief of whom was Leopold Zunz, who had organized in 1819 the Society for the Science of Judaism. The great monument of this pre-Geiger movement was Zunz' epoch making work *Die Gottesdienstlichen Vortraege der Juden*, in which the author by an exhaustive study of the homiletic works of the Jews proved that preaching in the vernacular far from being an innovation had been in vogue in Jewish communities of aforetimes. Preaching in the vernacular was one of the so-called innovations of the reformers; such preaching had been practically unknown among the Jews for several centuries; Zunz proved that this was due simply to the conditions of Jewish life; the need for such preaching being now again felt, it was quite in accord with the Jewish spirit. This work of Zunz furnished a brilliant example of the possibilities of founding reforms on a scientific basis. Geiger made such scientific study the point of departure for his activity as a reformer.

When twenty-five years of age, he began the publication of his magazine *Die Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift fuer judische Theologie* (Scientific Magazine for

[17] Philipson, *The Reform Movement in Judaism*, 66.

Jewish Theology.) During the thirteen years of the existence of this magazine, he published in its pages many profound and erudite studies as well as a series of brilliant articles on present religious conditions which necessitated the movement for reform. The one lasting result of the conference of rabbis which he convened at Wiesbaden where he began his rabbinical career, was the impetus to study various perplexing subjects which were demanding attention and to draw conclusions for the guidance of contemporaneous Jewish communities from such study.[18] In a letter written to his friend J. Derenbourg in Paris on January 16, 1838 in a moment of deep depression, Geiger after deploring the difficulties encountered in the struggle with orthodoxy, states that he may find it necessary to retire from the field of active life "and to devote himself to pure learning in order to find and to give expression there to the truths which still form the center of my efforts and to leave their practical application to others."[19] In these words he indicates briefly but fully his idea of the institution of reforms; the principles and truths were to be sought in study; thereupon they were to be applied in practice. For him the reform movement was not opportunistic, but it was spirit of Judaism's spirit; it was as essential a product of this spirit as were any of the movements in Jewish life from the very beginning. As his life

[18] See letter written by Geiger to Jacob Auerbach, August 22, 1837, *Nachgelassene Schriften*, V. 99.

[19] *Abraham Geiger's Briefe an J. Derenbourg* herausgegaben von Ludwig Geiger, *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* 1896, p. 236-8.

advanced he became more and more convinced that this was the true method for the placing of the reform movement on a solid foundation. This becomes clear when one examines the last productions of his pen which appeared in the second magazine that he founded, his *Juedische Zeitschrift fuer Wissenschaft und Leben* (Jewish Magazine for Knowledge and Life, 1861-1875). The opening article of that magazine may be considered as expressing his matured thought; it is remarkable how closely it adheres to the ideas to which he gave voice twenty-five years previously on this subject; he never swerved from the position that the knowledge of the past productions of the Jewish spirit must form the foundation whereon all Jewish effort must build. The life of the present must draw its inspiration and its strength from the strain and striving of all the ages past.

The belief in Judaism's gradual development as evidenced by the study of the religio-literary products of ages past being the prime article of Geiger's program as a reformer his specific attitude in the practical religious activities of his generation naturally rested upon this. He deprecated constantly revolutionary and radical methods. Reform must be gradual not revolutionary;[20] changes must be gradual, not violent;[21] reform must be constructive, not merely destructive;[22] reform must be not a movement of shreds and patches,

[20] *Nachgelassene Schriften*, I. 205-6. *Juedische Zeitschrift fuer Wissenschaft und Leben*, VI., 4.

[21] *Nachgelassene Schriften*, V. 196, 202, 206-7.

[22] "Mein Streben ging niemals dahin blos abzuwerfen, etc." *Nachgelassene Schriften*, V. 141.

but a comprehensive understanding of the philosophy of Judaism.[23] Neither must the reformer act simply as an individual but he must have in mind the religious welfare of all Jewry; he is a part of a great historical community from which in his zeal for reforming he may not cut himself loose; hence reforms must be achieved within the congregation as a link with the whole body of Judaism;[24] yet the needs and the rights of the individual may not be sacrificed to the blind fetich worship of the past and an undue regard for catholic Israel.[25] His personal attitude in this matter is clearly expressed in a letter written to the Board of Directors of the Breslau Congregation in answer to a request for an explanation of his attitude as a reformer. In this letter he wrote as follows: "I have always advocated such true and real progress whose aim it is to strengthen the pure divine content of Judaism in the heart by freeing it of temporal dross; I have been and am constantly striving to give religious forms an interpretation which is likely to awaken to life and kindle sentiment * * * The rabbi who is sincerely concerned for the welfare of the whole congregation and who has the religious life of all at heart will act as a conciliating, enlightening, stimulating influence; he will strive to maintain himself free from partisanship and the more difficult this is in the violent storms of the present the more must he aim to attain this position."[26] He stood pre-

[23] Ibid., p. 188 ff.

[24] Ibid., I., 205.

[25] Ibid., 206. See also *Juedische Zeitschrift fuer Wissenschaft und Leben*, III., 216-18.

[26] *Israelit des Neunzehuten Jahrhunderts*, VI., 160.

eminently for sane, historical reform. There was nothing revolutionary or radical in his make-up yet he counselled patience in dealing with the radical temper; in speaking of the radicals in his own congregation he said "I desire to quiet them, but not to aggravate them and drive them out" (*ich will sie beruhigen aber nicht reizen und hinauswerfen.*)[27] His feeling in this matter of radical reform was most clearly brought out in his relations with the Berlin Reform Congregation whose radical program he could not endorse. He felt that this congregation had broken in a measure with the historic spirit of Judaism and produced an unnecessary schism. For this reason he refused twice the offer to become the rabbi of this congregation, the first time when the congregation was organized in 1845, and the second time after the death of Holdheim in 1860. His various expressions on this subject of a schism in Judaism show how fine was his understanding of the situation. He feared not the cry that was constantly raised by the orthodox party that reform would create a schism.[28] In a letter to Zunz in 1841 he wrote that a schism was the only means of salvation in the intolerable condition of Judaism;[29] to save the situation schism was justifiable, but a schism may not be made intentionally as was done by the Frankfor reformers when they organized the Society of the Friends of Reform;[30] if a schism is the result of

[27] Ibid., V. 192.

[28] *Nachgelassene Schriften*, V., 102, 103.

[29] *Ibid.*, V. 155.

[30] Philipson *The Reform Movement in Judaism*, p. 147.

sincere and conscientious effort for the salvation of Judaism, well and good; Geiger desired to accomplish "the reform of the whole community;"[31] when the Berlin congregation was to be organized he expressed the hope that it would not cause a schism; schism may be necessary but it must be a healthy schism[32] and not a radical breaking away from the regular course of Jewish development. Since he considered the Berlin movement unjustifiably schismatic he felt that he could not respond to the call to become the leader of that congregation. Radical methods though seemingly effective at first and attractive to many, because of their startling and sensational features, did not appeal to Geiger whose point of view was formed by a fine blending of appreciation of past achievement, present need and future possibilities. As he advanced in life, this attitude of mind became more and more pronounced; he gave expression to it in a hundred and one ways; let one of these expressions, penned in 1861, he cited as indicative of his unceasing faith in the doctrine of development and in the ultimate triumph of the liberal movement: "Let natural development pursue its own way; I hurry not; every day enlarges and fortifies my position * * * and time remains after all a mighty ally."[33]

[31] *Nachgelassene Schriften*, V. 169, "Ich predige Reform der Gesammtheit."

[32] *Ibid.*, V. 178-9.

[33] Lassen wir der natuerlichen Bewegung nur ihre eigene Entwickelung; ich eile nicht; ein jeder Tag erweitert und befestigt mein Terrain—die Zeit bleibt doch eine maechtige Bundesgenossin. *Nachgelassene Schriften*, V. 253.

These were the leading features of Geiger's thought as a reformer. His course of action in the stirring events which took place in his lifetime and in which he was one of the most prominent figures furnishes an illuminating commentary on this program. His feeling that reforms should emanate neither from an individual rabbi nor an individual congregation but should be the concern of the community of Israel led him to call the conference of rabbis at Wiesbaden in 1837. The meager success of this initial movement for concerted action did not deter him from further efforts in this direction and when Ludwig Philippson issued the call for a rabbinical conference for the consideration of the many perplexing problems that were vexing the Jews, Abraham Geiger heartily supported the call; in the three great conferences held at Brunswick, Frankfort on the Main and Breslau, in the years 1844, 1845 and 1846, Geiger took a very leading part, if not the leading part;[34] the purpose of these conferences was to arrive at some solution of the problems raised by the position of the Jews in the modern environment; whatever may be the verdict of the success or failure of the conferences it must always be conceded that they were a conscientious and sincere effort to promote the spirit of union and to continue the line of historical development in Judaism by interpreting the traditions in the light of present conditions. The conferences rested upon the thesis that reform is the latest phase in the development of the spirit of Judaism. This was essentially Geiger's

[34] Philipson *The Reform Movement in Judaism*, 197-317 passim.

standpoint and therefore the convening of these conferences apart from any question of their success or failure must be considered a practical demonstration of the standpoint which Geiger and those who thought with him represented.

The feeling that the liberal movement to be effective must rest upon united action and not be a matter of individual whim or caprice also led Geiger early in his career to advocate the founding of a seminary for the training of rabbis for modern congregations. The rabbinical seminary of Breslau founded in 1854 had proved a keen disappointment to Geiger who was rabbi of the congregation of that city. He charged the siminary with failure to educate rabbis to grapple with the modern situation in Jewry; he claimed that its course of study was dominated by the spirit of pilpulism and that no provision was made whereby the students would receive guidance for effective work as leaders of modern congregations.[35] The Breslau seminary represented reaction according to Geiger's view. Therefore he advocated constantly the foundation of a rabbinical school whose curriculum should be fashioned along progressive lines.[36] This wish was realized when the *Hochschule fuer die Wissenschaft des Judenthums* was founded in Berlin in 1871. Here Geiger taught until his death. Here he reared disciples who carried into the spheres of their activity the ideas which he taught. The *Hochschule*, like the conferences, represented constructive work of a high order and both were regarded

[35] *Juedische Zeitschrift fuer Wissenschaft und Leben*, I. 168-74.
[36] Ibid. *Was thut Noth?* III. 254.

by Geiger as containing the highest possibilities for the positive achievements of the reform movement.

The reaction against the liberal movements both in government and in religion which characterized the earlier half of the nineteenth century was much in evidence particularly in Germany and Austria in the sixth decade of the last century. As in Christianity so in Judaism this was the case. The movement known as neo-orthodoxy whose chief protagonist was Samson Raphael Hirsch, a leader of unusual power and a scholar of great gifts was attracting many by its appeal to the romantic views then much in vogue. Geiger, the acknowledged leader of liberal Judaism, broke many a lance in his contest with the champions of reactionism and romanticism. His trenchant essay *Alte Romantik, neue Reaktion*[37] set forth in forcible style the real inwardness of the contemporary reactionary movements in Judaism and elsewhere which movements were simply modern forms of an earlier romanticism. He felt that this reactionism could be met most effectively by gatherings of Jewish leaders who should discuss the problems that were troubling the welfare of Israel. In that same article "What is Needed?" in which he had urged the necessity of founding a theological seminary he had advocated the convening of "large gatherings for the discussion of Jewish questions."[38] Many rabbis evidently were in sympathy with this for in 1868 the rabbinical conference of Cassel convened, the first gathering of Jewish leaders in Germany since 1846.

[37] *Zeitschrift fuer Wissenschaft und Leben*, I. 245.

[38] Ibid., III 225; see also, VI., 169.

This conference is chiefly significant for having paved the way for the famous synods of Leipzig and Augsburg in 1869 and 1871, the first assemblies in the history of modern Judaism in which rabbis and laymen came together for deliberations upon religious problems. Geiger had struck the keynote for the calling of such assemblies when he wrote in 1865, "By such means only does regenerated interest as well as mutual understanding and enlightenment arise." This is the crux of the whole matter. In such assemblies, general practical questions which are continually cropping up, spring forth of themselves. They can not be prescribed beforehand. It is a mistake to insist continually upon a declaration of a practical tangible purpose for such an assembly when the practical achievement lies in the very convening of such a large body which is susceptible of every sort of stimulation and is ready to lend its strength to every movement looking toward revival and improvement in wider and narrower circles. Finished results and definite aims should not be presented to it but means should be offered to bring about a more correct knowledge of Judaism and to effect a blending of the religious spirit with life by which means the adequate result will be accomplished in every instance. Every epoch produces its problems which affect now a larger, now a smaller sphere but which are not solved properly because general interest and the vigor of combined action are lacking.[39] In

[39] *Juedische Zeitschrift fuer Wissenschaft und Leben* III., 254-55. See also *Views on the Synod* (compiled by Committee of Central Conference of American Rabbis), 39, Baltimore, 1905.

the synods Geiger was the leading rabbinical figure. He submitted a number of important propositions. He felt that the pronouncement of such representative assemblies would carry much weight in Jewish communities even though they had not ecclesiastical authority to coerce the acceptance of their findings. Even though the synods did not accomplish what Geiger and others hoped for in unravelling the tangled threads, yet were they an earnest endeavor to meet a most perplexing situation;[40] they gave evidence of Geiger's constructive abilities and of his clear grasp of the needs of his generation.

Much of the practical activity of the reformers was concerned of necessity with the ritual. In the ritual of a religion the principles of the faith receive voice. The prayer book is the expression of the corporate religious conscience. Among the Jews the prayer book represented a growth of many centuries. Many of the prayers expressed thoughts and hopes which were at variance with the religious outlook of the Jew in the modern world. Therefore we find that almost from the beginning the reformers occupied themselves with making such changes in the traditional prayers and the whole mode of conducting the services as seemed to them to be demanded by the changed conditions, thoughts, beliefs and requirements of the modern Jew. This resulted unfortunately in great confusion for many prayer books were produced either by individual rabbis or congregations. True, there had been from time out of mind different orders of liturgy among Jews that had found expres-

[40] Philipson *The Reform Movement in Judaism*, 398-460.

sion in the divergencies of the so-called Ashkenazic and Sephardic rites; but this line of cleavage did not impair the authority of either ritual among its own followers; further, the differences between the two rites were concerned not as much with beliefs as with expressions and customs. Thus there were practically two liturgies but within its own sphere each had unquestioned allegiance. With the arising of the liberal movement this body of liturgical authority was broken up. The prophet of old had complained that as many cities as there were in Israel, so many altars were there. Thus also it might have been said in the early years of the reform movement, when many prayer books were produced. This was one of the necessary accompaniments perhaps of the new movement. As soon as the necessity of change is recognized and acknowledged, the individual views of what changes shall be made seek expression. After a time there is a sifting of these views and the reformers too are found to have a common ground. This consensus of religious opinion and expression among reformers produced after many years the Union Prayer Book which has been accepted by the reform congregations of the United States with few exceptions as the ritual embodying their religious beliefs and aspirations.

Much of Geiger's religious activity was concerned with these questions of the liturgy. One of his early studies was a comprehensive review and criticism of the Hamburg Temple Prayer Book;[41] in the great

[41] *Der Hamburger Templestreit, Nachgelassene Schriften*, I., 113-196.

debates on the liturgy which were the chief feature of the Frankfort rabbinical conference, he took a leading part; in his own congregation at Breslau he began making reforms in the ritual in 1844; he himself was not eager to produce a new prayer book; as long as changes in the ritual were in the making, he did not feel that they should be fixed in printed form; while the changes were fluid, there might be inconsistencies here and there which would not arouse comment for, after all, the expression that religious feeling and sentiment took was not to be measured by the rules of consistency; but as soon as these changes were fixed in a printed book the inconsistencies would be glaring.[42] Still the board of directors of the congregation was insistent upon the preparation and publication of a prayer book that should meet the religious requirements of the congregation. Geiger thereupon prepared a plan for a new prayer book[43] and after the lapse of a few years the book which embodied the principles here stated appeared.[44] A careful examination of this book reveals many inconsistencies, just as Geiger had feared; these he removed in great part in the second edition of the prayer book published sixteen years later. This second prayer book was planned and executed along the lines of the suggestions which he submitted to the Leipzig Synod[45] and the

[42] *Introduction to Prayer Book* VI., Breslau, 1845.

[43] *Grundlage und Plan zu einen neuen Gebetbuche*, Breslau, 1849.

[44] סדר תפלה דבר יום ביומו Israelitsches Gebetbuch fuer den oeffentlichen Gottesdienst im ganzen Jahre. Breslau 1854.

[45] *Thesen fuer die Leipziger Versammlung, Zeitschrift fuer Wissenschaft und Leben*, VII., p. 161.

elaborate plan for a new prayer book which he drew up shortly thereafter.[46] At this time Geiger was rabbi in Frankfort on the Main. His successor at Breslau, Dr. M. Joel, known for his fine studies in Jewish philosophy, had published early in 1867 an essay in defense of the traditional prayer book; he argued for the retention of all the traditional prayers even those that petitioned for a restoration of the sacrifices, for the coming of the personal Messiah, and for the bodily resurrection.[47] Joel was an adherent of the position taken by the Breslau theological seminary which demanded absolute conformity to the rabbinical tradition in practice while permitting latitude of thought. Thus although the restoration of the sacrifices might not be desired nor believed in, still the petition for such restoration must be retained in the liturgy, because the traditional prayer book must not be tampered with. Geiger, to whom this attitude was intolerable and who frequently castigated the Breslau school with all the scorn at his command, answered Joel's brochure in a lengthy criticism.[48] Joel's moving thought was the integrity of catholic Israel; this must be maintained even at the expense of individual conviction and intellectual honesty; such was also the position of Zacharias Frankel; Geiger on the other hand, championed the necessity of progressive thought and of loyalty to truth above all other considerations.

[46] *Plan zu einen neuen Gebetbuche*, Ibid., 241-280.

[47] *Zur Orientirung in der Cultusfrage* 1867.

[48] *Etwas ueber Glauben und Beten. Zu Schutz und Trutz.* J. Z. W. L. VII., 1-59.

Enough has been written to make clear Geiger's general principles as a religious reformer. It remains to take up the special articles of his practical program which gave point to the theories which he held.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE SERVICE. At the Frankfort rabbinical conference in 1845 where the question of changes in the liturgy was discussed for the first time in a public assembly, Geiger declared unequivocally that there was no prohibition anywhere against using languages besides the Hebrew in prayer. He stated that the ancient authorities permitted prayer to be spoken in any language. As for himself he deemed it desirable that the service should be conducted in the vernacular because "all our deepest feelings and sentiments, all our highest thoughts receive expression through it." Hebrew, he went on to say, is no longer a living tongue; it is painfully apparent how listless and inattentive congregations are, for example, while the section from the Torah is being read. In answer to the claim which had been advanced that the very foundations of Judaism would be shattered were Hebrew to be eliminated from the service he wished to say that he considered Judaism to be in a perilous state indeed if it required a language as a prop to sustain it. If they were to agree that the Hebrew language is an absolute essential, this would be tantamount to declaring Judaism to be a national religion since a peculiar language is the sign patent of nationality; and it was certain that none of the rabbis in the assembly would agree that Judaism is dependent upon the existence of a separate nationality.

However when the practical issue presented itself

to him of preparing a new prayer book he found that the question was not to be solved by theoretical considerations only; memories and sentiments of a great past had to be considered as well as the views and needs of the present. In the introduction to the prayer book which he issued in 1854 he wrote: "The significance of the prayers consists not alone in their content but also in their traditional forms, in the verbiage in which they have been bequeathed to us, hence, also in the Hebrew language. This must remain therefore with few exceptions the language of prayer." The exceptions were the prayers inserted during the service and spoken by the rabbi, such as the prayer for the government, special prayers for the sick, for a newly born child, etc.; such prayers were to be uttered in German. A German translation accompanied the Hebrew prayers. This translation was not a literal version but rather a paraphrase which reflected the contents of the original.

In 1860, Geiger issued a pamphlet in which he discussed anew the question of the reform of the liturgy.[49] The views here expressed were much the same as had found expression in the preface to the prayer book. Although the Hebrew prayers no longer aroused devotion because of the unfamiliarity of the worshippers with the language, although too, there could be no doubt that prayers in the vernacular would do this to a much greater degree, still because of the great significance of the Hebrew language in the development of Judaism it must retain for the present

[49] *Nothwendigkeit und Maass einer Reform des juedischen Gottesdientes.* Republished in *Nachgelassene Schriften*, I., 203.

at least a large place in the public service. "A wise compromise must be arrived at in this matter," he wrote, "it is possible, yes, it is altogether likely, that a not distant future will demand and grant the changes more readily; at this time both the present need and pious recollection must be satisfied." Therefore he suggested the following as a working plan: The prayers for silent devotion as well as those for special occasions spoken by the rabbi were to be in the vernacular. The other prayers must be judiciously divided between the two languages. But a certain harmony must be preserved; there must not be an indiscriminate mixing of Hebrew and German prayers. The German element of the service should be grouped about the sermon. The order of service would thus be: a short Hebrew *Schacharit* service, dotted at intervals with prayers for silent devotion in German; the reading from the Torah in Hebrew; a selection from the prophets in German; German prayers for the congregation, the government and special occasions; the sermon; a German song and a German prayer; the abbreviated *Mussaf* service in Hebrew, with a German prayer for silent devotion to close the service for Sabbath and Holidays. Geiger says further: "This question of language is the most difficult point in the new arrangement of the public service; it is quite possible that no suggestions will give entire satisfaction to all parties. Here if anywhere the demand is justified that each and everyone sacrifice something of his own desires for the good of the whole. May the one party consider that it is their duty to co-operate towards the end that the house of wroship

become not altogether closed to the young, and the other party see to it that they drive not the older generation out of the house of God."[50]

In 1868, in an article entitled "Unser Gottesdienst,[51] he reverts to the subject of the language of the service; while the exigencies of the present demand the greater portion of the service to be in Hebrew, yet he felt that this would change in the near future when the greater portion of the service must be in the vernacular.[52] Future generations in all likelihood would become less and less familiar with the Hebrew and the service would have to be accommodated to this condition.[53] However for the present, conditions were such as required the retention of the Hebrew. His last utterance which we have on this subject is contained in his plan for a new prayer book which he drew up for presentation to the Synod which met in Leipzig in 1869.[54] In this plan he laid down a number of guiding principles. The first and second of these touched the subject of the language of the service. Here he says essentially what he had said fifteen years previously in his preface to his first prayer book. The greater portion of the service was to be conducted in Hebrew; however, there were to be a number of prayers and meditations in German. There was also

[50] *Nachgelassene Schriften*, I., 210-215.

[51] W. Z. J. L. VI., 1-21.

[52] Die Geschichte hat das Urtheil gesprochen wenn es such noch nicht vollzogen ist. Unser Gottesdienst muss und wird in naher Zukunft seine sprachliche Neugeburt feiern. Ibid., 7.

[53] Gottesdienstliche Feier ist der Menschen wegen und nicht der Mensch nach ihr einzurichten. Ibid.

[54] *Plan zu einen neuen Gebetbuche* J. Z. W. L. VII., 241-280.

to be a free German translation which should attempt to reproduce the spirit of the original rather than aim to be an exact and literal reproduction of the Hebrew words.

These suggestions were embodied in his second prayer book published in 1870.

We have here an exemplification of Geiger's attitude of mind. Although fully convinced that the vernacular should displace the Hebrew almost entirely as the language of prayer, still he felt that such a proceeding in his age and generation would be so revolutionary as to detach the congregation which would adopt it from the main body of the synagogue.

This is what actually happened to the Berlin reform congregation under Holdheim's leadership. Holdheim carried out his theories to their logical end no matter what the cost. He had not the historical sense nor the consciousness of the solidarity of Israel that Geiger had. Geiger felt that reform must move slowly, hence frequently his practice lagged far behind his theory; he desired constructive reform, which should permeate all Jewry; his aim was to retain as far as possible the connection with the whole house of Israel and therefore he was content to sacrifice theory for the time, assured that in the progress of the years his theory would be translated into practice. He looked far ahead and for this reason was content even though in his own day practice did not keep pace with his religious thought.

The Contents of the Prayer Book. In Geiger's opinion the contents of the traditional prayer book required elimination, change or recasting as the case

might be. He contended that the service was too long and wearied the worshippers; therefore it must be abbreviated; all unnecessary repetitions and unessential and unmeaning portions must be eliminated. He urged that the more crude religious conceptions of an earlier day as embodied in a number of prayers must give way to the less crude conceptions of a later age. In this category might be named:

(*a*) Anthropomorphic designations of the Diety, frequent in the *piyyutim*;[55] these should be eliminated.

(*b*) The enumeration of the various classes of angels and the description of their activity; this too should be removed from the prayers.[56]

(*c*) The belief in immortality must find expression not alone in the doctrine of the bodily resurrection, but also in that of spiritual immortality.

But chiefly must the world mission of Israel be emphasized in the liturgy; therefore the nationalistic conception of Israel so prominent in the traditional prayers must give way to the universalistic. The separation between Israel and the other peoples should

[55] Liturgical poems.

[56] cf also preface to Geiger's second prayer book. Berlin 1870. In the 1854 edition of the prayer book Geiger retained the traditional angelology. In the second prayer book we note changes in accordance with his growing thought. Thus in the Schacharit *Kedushah* he substitutes the word ונאמר for the phrase שרפים....והאפנים והיות הקדש ; so also in the Schacharit *Shemoneh Esreh*, the second prayer book omits the phrase בשם שמקדישים אותו בשמי מרום and substitutes the word ונאמר for לעמתם ברוך יאמרו.

find no expression in the prayers but rather the hope that such barriers gradually disappear. So also all prayers for the restitution of the Jewish state in Palestine, the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, the re-institution of the sacrificial service and the re-gathering of all the dispersed of Israel and their return to Palestine must be eliminated for they are not expressive of our thought.[57] To utter such petitions would be to utter untruths. For them the prayer for the coming of the time when the brotherhood of man will be achieved should be substituted.[58]

With the passing of time Geiger became more and more convinced that the chief point of difference between the traditional and the liberal school lay in

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[57] Thus in the fifteenth benediction of the Shemoneh Esreh he omits the words וחשב את העבודה לדביר ביתך At the close of the 18 benedictions he omits the entire petition יהי רצון . . . . שיבנה בית המקדש. In the *Mussaf* for the three high feasts he omits the petition ותבנהו מהרה ותגדל כבודו so also in the benediction אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו ; in the same *Mussaf* he omits the petition for the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the restoration of Israel to Palestine. True he was not entirely consistent in this matter in his 1854 edition of the prayer book for here and there some expressions of this character were retained; these he removed entirely in the second prayer book where for the traditional petition for the return, the rebuilding of the temple, etc., in the *Mussaf* prayer for the holy days, he substitutes the following universalistic petition: וביתך בית תפלה לכל העם יקרא אבינו מלכנו גלה כבוד מלכותך עלינו לעיני כל חי: ארשת שפתינו תקבל ברצון ונדיבת פינו ראה נא ביום (השבת הזה וביום) הכפורים הזה שכתבת עלינו בתרתך

[58] *Plan zu einen Neuen Gebetbuche*, J. Z. W. L. VII., 245-7.

the interpretation of Israel's mission. He was a prophet of universalistic Judaism; the nationalistic interpretation of Judaism's future seemed to him to misread altogether the purpose of God in His preservation of the Jewish people. Hence he changed or omitted all expressions in the traditional prayer book which reflected the nationalistic view.[59] In accordance with this interpretation of Israel's work in the world the traditional explanation of the dispersion also underwent a change in his thought. Far from looking upon the dispersion as a misfortune or a curse, and the present state of the Jews a state of exile he considered the loss of Palestine and the consequent dispersion as a blessing, a part of God's plan for the larger work of Israel.[60] Therefore his conception of *Tisha b'ab*, the anniversary of the destruction of Jerusalem assumed a form different from the traditional view. The prayer which he wrote for the

[59] Thus he either omits such petitions as והביאנו לשלום מארבע כנפות הארץ or changes them to express the universalistic view; e. g., for the traditional benediction ושא נס לקבץ גליותנו he substitutes והושע יי את עמך את שארית ישראל בארבע כנפות הארץ: ברוך אתה יי מושיע שארית עמו ישראל:

[60] Thus he omits the petition חוסה יי עלינו בארץ שבינו in which the land of Israel's present sojourn is designated a land of captivity; so also he omits the יהי רצון in the traditional prayer book which was spoken before the Torah was returned to the Ark, because this petition contains supplications for deliverance from present exile, for the rebuilding of the temple, etc. Cf. German paraphrase of benedictions VII-XV of the *Shemoneh Esreh* in his prayer book; also his German substitute for the long penitential והוא רחום .

morning service of that day interprets the fall of Jerusalem and the tragical experience of Israel in the world since then in the light of the universal mission.[61]

In his interpretation of Israel's place in the world he substituted the universalistic conception for the traditional nationalistic; he claimed that Israel lives no longer as a nation in the hearts and wishes of the present generation; it is regarded as a religious community (*Glaubensgemeinde*), the prayers must therefore be changed accordingly and the expression of the universal mission throughout the world must find place in the prayers in lieu of the nationalism and palestinianism of the traditional prayer book.[62]

What then of the belief that Israel was chosen by God for its particular work in the world? Geiger fully believed that Israel was set apart for a special purpose but he contended that all such chauvinistic prayers and expressions as exalted Israel at the expense of other peoples must be changed or eliminated.[63] The boastful notion that merely because God has

[61] The fire which destroyed Jerusalem was to be also a fire of purification for Israel and humanity. Israel was to examine into its way and remove all the dross and illuminate mankind with the light of its teaching. Our fathers have had to endure much; yes, our time of suffering is not yet past; but Thy name is being acknowledged more and more among men and Israel is being gradually recognized." (*Israelitisches Gebetbuch*, von Abraham Geiger, 45.)

[62] *Gesammelte Schriften*, I., 207.

[63] Thus in the ברכת התורה he omits the words מכל העמים after בחר ; in the prayer ובא לציון he omits the phrase והבדילנו מן התעים ; in עלינו he substitutes the words שנגלה לאבותינו והדיעם את רצונו וכרת אתם את בריתו והנהילנו תורתו for the words in the traditional prayer book שלא עשנו כגויי

chosen Israel, this people was therefore better than other peoples was irreligious; quite contrariwise must this conception be interpreted; because God had chosen Israel, therefore the obligation lay upon this people to attempt to become more and more worthy of this distinction by exemplary conduct.[64] The choice entailed responsibility not privilege. In a line with his conception of the universalistic character of Israel's mission and his substitution of the world in place of Palestine as the sphere of Israel's work was his interpretation of the Messianic doctrine. We note that with the passing of the years he repudiated the traditional belief in the coming of a personal Messiah who was to gather the people of Israel from all parts of the earth whereunto they had been dispersed and lead them back to Palestine; for this conception he substituted the doctrine of the

הארצות ולא שמנו כמשפחות האדמה שלא שם חלקנו כהם וגרלנו בכל המון In the *Kiddush* for Sabbath eve he omits the words מכל העמים after ואותנו קדשת In the prayer אהבה רבה he omits the words מכל עם ולשון after ובנו בחרת In the fourth benediction he omits the phrase ולא נתתו יי אלהינו לגויי הארצות ולא הנחלתו מלכנו לעובדי פסילים וגם במנוחתו לא ישבנו In the *Mussaf* prayer for ראש חרש Geiger omits the words מכל האמות after כי בעמך ישראל בחרת In the *Habdalah* service he omits the phrase בין ישראל לעמים In the prayer אתה בחרתנו in the evening service for the three high feasts he omits the words מכל העמים and ורממתנו מכל הלשונות; so also in the similar prayer on *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Hakippurum.*

[64] Gesammelte Schriften I. 208; see also J. Z. W L. VI., 19; VII., 164.

coming of the Messianic Age, the realization on earth of the ideals of universal peace and good will.[65]

Thus was Geiger a true preacher of universalistic Judaism; none appreciated more thoroughly than did he the significance of Israel's wonderful preservation; none sympathized more completely than did he with all the harrowing experiences of Israel among the nations of the world. And because of these things he could delve more deeply than most men into the meaning of it all; his was a philosphy of history which recognizing God in all and above all, fitted Israel into its place in the general scheme of humanity's life. And this place he found to be among men every-

[65] A comparison of the second edition of Geiger's prayer book with the first reveals some interesting facts in this matter. In the first edition he was not entirely consistent; he retained some prayers for the coming of the personal Messiah; these he either eliminated or changed in the second edition of the prayer book. Thus in the first benediction of the *Shemoneh Esreh* he retained the words ומביא גואל in his first prayer book; in the second he changed this to the phrase ומביא גאולה ; in his first prayer book he retained the petition for the coming of the personal Messiah את צמח דוד ; this is omitted in the second prayer book; it is noticeable, however, that, in the German rendering of the prayer in the first prayer book there is no mention whatsoever of the personal Messiah, and the entire petition for Israel's restoration is given a universalistic coloring. Similarly in the words inserted on the holidays in the benediction רצה we find that in the first prayer book Geiger retained the phrase וזכרון משיח בן דוד but omitted it in the second prayer book. In the first prayer book he retained the references to the Messiah in the petition ובכן תן on *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Hakippurum*; be changed these in the second prayer book.

where.[66] Only by serving in all the earth would Israel fulfill its divinely appointed mission and point the way to the coming of the day when the knowledge of God would cover the earth as the waters cover the sea

Geiger's liberal religious ideas touched and transformed not only the liturgy but colored his interpretation of all the customs, ceremonies and traditions of the Jewish people. A brief consideration of the more important and significant of these will form a fitting close to this paper.

CEREMONIES: On the subject of the observance of ceremonies in general Geiger was in no wise radical. He believed in the necessity of ceremonies to express the spirit of religion but he insisted that such ceremonies must be vitally significant and not mere survivals from a dead past. Ceremonies which were mere forms and no longer strengthened the religious sentiment or ceremonies which represented outgrown religious ideas, must be abandoned and replaced by other ceremonies which expressed the latter day religious consciousness. In a striking essay, published in 1839 on the subject *"Der Formglaube in Seinem Unwerthe und in seinen Folgen"*[67] he set forth clearly his ideas on the subject. In this essay he wrote as follows: "Judaism looks upon religious ceremonies

[66] May it (Israel) recognize its high mission among men, to carry Thy name as a holy banner throughout the ages, to proclaim Thy unity, to prepare the true kingdom of God. (Prayer Book, 41, Breslau, 1854).

[67] *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift fuer juedische Theologie*, IV., 1-12; See also his comprehensive review of Brueck's *Rabbinische Ceremonialgebraeuche*. Ibid., III., 413-26.

as the means for strengthening our religio-ethical sentiments. These ceremonies serve as reminiscences of past events whereby we think of God's paternal and wise overruling Providence or are humbled; they serve also to strengthen our good intentions or to preserve or regain our spiritual purity. Their validity therefore continues only so long as they have this living power; this is possible only if they meet local conditions and conform to the stage of contemporary culture. When, however, ceremonies no longer possess the power to fulfill this purpose and are still retained, yes, when they are observed for their own sake and are no longer looked upon simply as means for the expression of the religious spirit, then they become entirely worthless; under such conditions we find that bare formalism has taken the place of free moral activity and the reign of superstition has been inaugurated." In other words, Geiger did not object to ceremonies in religion but to ceremonialism, the perfunctory observance of ceremonies which had ceased to have any meaning for his generation. Thus in a letter to Zunz who had published an ingenuous argument for the retention of the ceremony of the laying of the phylacteries Geiger expressed his surprise at Zunz's casuistical attempt. Geiger asked pointedly whether Zunz really believed that the ceremony of laying the *tefillin* which had its origin in the superstitious belief in the efficacy of amulets, could be fruitful of spiritual good for a generation to whose cultural and aesthetic point of view this was entirely foreign. True, every ceremony can be given a deeper significance. That at some time or

other every ceremony had a living significance is also true; but the dead remains dead, the spirit which was in it aforetime continues in another manner and works in other forms; but the effort to resurrect the dead is vain and even were it successful it would only produce results which would kill all spiritual and moral life.[68] Geiger had many a controversy with Zunz in this field. Zunz who had begun as a reformer became as years passed a defender of the traditional *status quo*; all the traditional ceremonies found in him an ardent and a learned defender; Judaism for him was simply a traditional system of forms and ceremonies without any spiritual message for the present; he held that the past is of value because it is past, the old because it is old. With all his vast learning Zunz could not appreciate nor understand the currents of living religious endeavor; Geiger's point of view was antipodal to Zunz's and in the attitude of these two men towards the ceremonial legislation we have the sharply defined contrast between the position of the religious reformer and the unprogressive traditionalist. A phrase that Geiger used in another letter to Zunz may be cited as particularly expressive of this antagonism: "The old is not always living and belongs rather in an archaeological museum than in a nursery."[69]

THE SABBATH. One of the most vexing problems of modern Jewish life is that of Sabbath observance. Owing to economic conditions the Jews in the modern world find it very difficult if not impossible to observe

[68] *Nachgelassene Schriften*, V., 181.
[69] *Nachgelassene Schriften*, V., 185.

the seventh day Sabbath as a day of rest and consecration. How to meet this perplexing situation has been the subject of earnest thought and effort of Jewish leaders from the time that it became acute. At the Brunswick rabbinical conference in 1844 the subject was brought up towards the close of the sessions; a committee was appointed to report on the question "Whether there were any means and if so, what, to reconcile Jewish doctrines with the demands of modern life in reference to the Sabbath." Geiger was a member of this committee. The report of the Committee was not acted upon until the Breslau Conference in 1846. Before this Conference met Geiger published a preliminary notice in which he set forth the work the conference would have to do.[70] He wrote concerning the Sabbath question as follows: "This question must be decided if Judaism is to exist on as a lasting influence and it will be decided if it is kept constantly on the tapis; it must be decided some one way or another by a ripe resolution of the committee. One of the most essential institutions of Judaism is the day of consecration and rest, and with this Judaism itself must be rescued from the unspeakable confusion and haziness in whose maw the whole religious life is in danger of being swallowed; rescue from this confusion will ensue only when it is exposed vividly in its imperfection and emptiness."

The discussions on the Sabbath question occupied the greater portion of the sessions of the Breslau Conference. The committee that had been appointed

[70] *Die dritte Versammlung deutscher Rabbiner. Ein Vorlaeufiges Wort zur Verstandigung,* (Breslau, 1846).

to draw up the report consisted of Rabbis Geiger, S. Adler, A. Adler, Wechsler and Kahn. The report that they presented was not unanimous. The majority report presented by Geiger, Wechsler and A. Adler set forth that the essential idea of the Sabbath is consecration of the day rather than complete absolute rest. This in fact was the sharpest point of distinction among the members of the conference as appeared in the full and lengthy discussions. At the close of the entire discussion Geiger, who was the president of the Conference stated that something must be done to preserve the Sabbath and that the Committee's suggestions were made with that end in view, but he confessed that they could suggest no satisfactory remedy that would remove completely the collision between life and Sabbath observance.[71]

The outcome of the discussion at the Breslau Conference was extremely unsatisfactory. Holdheim had declared himself unequivocally for a transfer of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. He regarded the Sabbath as an אות, a symbol; it was therefore not the day that was significant but the idea and the idea could find realization on any day. Geiger declared flatly in contradiction to Holdheim, that the Bible does not consider the Sabbath a symbol. None others of the rabbis present at Breslau with the exception of M. Hess was prepared to follow Holdheim in his radical program. But they had no other solution to offer for the difficulties involved in the situation. The resolutions finally adopted fell lamentably short of meeting the issue. The Conference was voted on

[71] *Protokolle der dritten Versammlung deutscher Rabbiner*, 160.

all sides a failure in its treatment of the Sabbath problem. Geiger himself who as president of the Conference considered it incumbent upon himself to place the work of the Conference before the public in the best light possible, still felt constrained to write these words: "I am frank to confess that the results achieved by the Conference towards a solution of the Sabbath problem are small in comparison with the collisions between Sabbath observance and life."[72]

Throughout all his life Geiger felt that this conflict was one of the most serious ills in modern Jewish life, yes, that in some measure it might be considered a very canker eating into the vitals of Judaism. He was very impatient with those who considered the Sabbath question simply from the standpoint of Talmudical casuistry; he felt that the Talmudical legislation for the Sabbath was outgrown; the issue involved was the very existence of the Sabbath as a day of consecration and rest; no pilpulistic casuistics availed; the situation now is altogether different from what it was when the Talmudical ideas of Sabbath observance were evolved. At the Augsburg Synod in 1871, he expressed himself very clearly on the subject when he said "The whole method and manner in which Sabbath observance has been developed during the past fifteen hundred years is clearly and decidedly contradictory of the true idea of the Sabbath; the scrupulous prohibition of a hundred and one tasks, the forced externalism—this is no longer the significance of the Sabbath. The significance of the Sabbath

[72] *Die dritte Rabbinerversammlung; ein vorlaeufiges Wort zur Verstaendigung*, 4.

lies in the composure of the spirit and of our whole nature. We must have this constantly in view and this can not be achieved by paragraphs nor by combinations and comparisons of passages from the writings of the casuists * * * Let us leave this alone, if we have not the courage to throw the whole casuistical legislation overboard. That indeed were the best thing to do. But let us approach only the question before us and express ourselves briefly and simply. This is very clear; if it has become evident that riding on the Sabbath will enable many to attend divine services who would be prevented otherwise, it may be taken for granted that this will be decided in the affirmative by an almost unanimous vote. But it is impossible to discuss the various minutiae of this and similar questions, viz.: what the old teachers taught—men, it is true, of the deepest insight; men whose memory we revere, but who lived in their age and not in ours; in an age of altogether different views, circumstances and conditions. Let us be concerned, then, not with this in our decisions of the point before us, but with the idea of the Sabbath, with the needs of our age."

Always the same clear note, always the same unconfused thought. He recognized the difficulties but even he, the finest mind among Jewish leaders could find no all satisfying solution. He was firmly convinced that the seventh day Sabbath is the Sabbath of Judaism. When the Berlin Reform Congregation, which had transferred the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, desired him to accept the position of rabbi of the congregation after Holdheim's death in 1860,

one of the reasons why he refused was that he would not abrogate the Sabbath.[73] However, this did not necessitate to his mind opposition to a supplementary service on Sunday for the benefit of such as could not attend on the Sabbath. In 1846 after the Breslau conference had adjourned he touched this subject in his defense of the Conference. He said that the Conference could not possibly suggest the transfer to Sunday; an institution of Judaism that has existed for thousands of years and is one of its very fundamentals can not be legislated out of existence * * * As for a service on Sunday there can certainly be no objection to a supplemental service so long as it is not a Sabbath service, and any congregation can institute it; but many fear that it is only the opening wedge to a complete transfer. The Conference although asked to pronounce upon the permissability of a service on Sunday for the benefit of such as do not attend on Saturday postponed consideration of the question, but it is only postponed; the Conference will have to take it up next year or some other time.

This prophecy failed of fulfilment because the Breslau Conference proved to be the last of these meetings; Geiger himself, however, fifteen years later again gave expression to this possible solution of the difficulties presented by the modern situation when, in a brochure already referred to,[74] after referring to the

[73] Ich sagte ihnen dass ich heute nicht annehmen werde was ich vor vierzehn Jahren abgelehnt, dass ich den Sabbath nicht abrogire, etc. Letter to Wechsler Sept. 6, 1860 in *Nachgelassene Schriften*, V., 247.

[74] *Nothwendigkeit und Maass einer Reform des Juedischen Gottesdienstes, Nachgelassene Schriften*, I., 226.

institution of a service on Mondays and Thursdays in ancient days for the benefit of those who could not attend on Sabbath he wrote: "Let us follow this example! We too have a week day which is particularly available for divine service because it is the public day of rest, viz: Sunday. Let us use it for this purpose, if not regularly every week, then from time to time. An impressive Sunday service held, let us say, once every four weeks will accomplish the purpose of giving a great portion of the congregation the opportunity of worshipping together without encroaching in any way upon the rights of the Sabbath * * * You make the Sabbath a work day, and Sunday a day of recreation, but must our religion give way to the claims of the present age on the former day and to the adherence to the past on the latter? This is self-deception by which the religious life will be totally extinguished."

CIRCUMCISION. In other phases of practical activity Geiger frequently found that he could not carry out his reformatory ideas. Thus while he looked upon circumcision as a "barbarous bloody act"[75] still he did not succeed in displacing it as the act of initiation into the covenant. In a letter written to Wechsler in 1849 he stated that he felt that a new form of initiation into Judaism must be found which would replace circumcision. "Blessing the mother does not appear sufficient, the child also should be present (in the synagogue); the reform might be inaugurated with the girls; thus gradually the new form would

[75] *Nachgelassene Schriften*, V., 181. (Letter to Zunz, 1845.)

displace circumcision as confirmation is displacing the *Bar Mizwah*.[76]

THE STATUS OF WOMAN. The *Bar Mitzwah* ceremony representing on the one hand the Oriental conception of woman's inferiority and on the other hand embodying the traditional rabbinical view of Judaism as a system of *mitzwot*, the observance of which became incumbent upon the male with the attainment of the age of religious majority was recognized in the early days of the reform movement as one of these ceremonies which gave point to the contention of the reformers that when a ceremony was merely a lifeless survival it could be removed none too soon and replaced by another ceremony that should be expressive of the new point of view. Therefore the confirmation ceremony for boys and girls was introduced; this ceremony expressed among other things the reform view of woman's religious equality with man. This vindication of woman's religious rights is one of the marked achievements of the reform movement. Geiger was the first public champion of the religious emancipation of the Jewish woman. In 1837 he published his famous essay entitled "*Die Stellung des Weiblichen Geschlechtes in dem Judenthume unserer Zeit.*" This was a stirring plea for woman's religious equality and closed with the eloquent words "Let there be from now on no distinction between duties for men and women unless flowing from the natural laws governing the sexes; no assumption of the spiritual minority of woman

[76] *Nachgelassene Schriften*, V., 202-3.

as though she were incapable of grasping the deep things in religion; no institution of the public service either in form or in content, which shuts the door of the temple in the face of woman; no degradation of the woman in the form of the marriage service, and no applying of fetters which may destroy woman's happiness. Then will also the Jewish girl and the Jewish woman, conscious of the significance of the faith, become fervently attached to it, and our whole religious life will profit from the beneficial influence which feminine hearts know how to bestow on it."[77]

In accordance with this view of woman's religious emancipation was Geiger's suggestion of a change in the traditional marriage ceremony. He was chairman of the committee on Marriage Reforms at the Augsburg Synod. The Committee suggested that the Synod declare it to be permissible for the bride to place a ring on the bridegroom's finger with some appropriate words after the groom placed the ring on the bride's finger with the traditional formula, הרי את מקדשת לי. In the pursuant discussion Geiger, after suggesting that the bride use the phrase אני לדודי ודודי לי (I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine) gave the reason for this recommendation of the Committee when he said: "The old judicial view according to which woman was a chattel that the man acquired, has disappeared entirely from among us. We do not wish to retain any

[77] *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift fuer juedische Theologie*, III., 1-14. In his prayer book Geiger omitted the benediction ברוך אתה יי.... שלא עשני אשה Praised be Thou, O Lord our Lord, Ruler of the Universe, Who has not made me a woman."

form whatsoever which was symbolical of the view of earlier days. This is the significance of the resolution that two rings be used in the ceremony in order that it may become known thereby that the man and the woman marry one another, as responsible moral personalites; or if only one ring be used, Judaism protests decidedly against the imputation that an old Oriental view still holds in its midst whereby the worth and dignity of woman is discriminated against legally in any way, even though this was not the case in life."

Marriage Laws. When the Leipzig Synod convened Geiger as stated above presented a number of subjects whereon he felt some action should be taken. Among these was the reform of the marriage laws. The Leipzig Synod appointed a committee to report on these reforms; this committee reported at the Augsburgh Synod which passed a number of resolutions reforming the rabbinical marriage legislation.[78] These resolutions were in a line with the suggestion of Geiger He advocated the abolition of the *chalitzah* ceremony. He desired also reforms in the divorce legislation in accordance with the following suggestions; a divorce according to rabbinical law should be given as a matter of course if the civil courts have granted a decree of divorce; the marriage of a divorced woman to a so-called *Kohen* or Aaronide should be permitted; all restrictions of the rabbinical law touching the marriage of the Kohen should be abolished; particularly should his marriage with a proselyte be permitted.

[78] Philipson *The Reform Movement in Judaism*, 435-446.

Here as elsewhere Geiger held that the rabbinical legislation must be changed or abolished in order to conform to the changed conditions in the life and outlook of the Jew in modern society. The rabbincial legislation as codified in the *Schulchan Arukh* was fitted to conditions in Jewish life which were no longer existent in the lands in which the Jews had been emancipated and had become occidentalized.

The Jewish reform movement in which Geiger played so prominent a part and the intent of which he so clearly understood is part and parcel of that great religious current which has been sweeping mankind forward since the beginning of the modern age. The Jew lives in the modern world, not apart from it; the separatism of mediaeval ghettoism and rabbinism has yielded to the participation in the culture and interests of the society in which he lives and whereof he forms a part. Here the strength of Judaism must find its supreme test. If this religion requires the ghetto, be it local or national, be it Russian Pale or Palestinian state, or in other words a separatist existence away from the non-Jewish surroundings to develop its highest possibilities it has no world mission. The reform movement denies this and declares that Judaism fulfills its highest reach by witnessing among men everywhere to the truth of God as declared by Moses and the prophets and developed through ages of endeavor and suffering by their followers. Such was the teaching and the faith of Abraham Geiger; his was the unshaken conviction that Judaism's greatest opportunity lies in its work among men in all parts of the world; the dispersion of

the Jews was providential; the emancipation of the latter days was the beginning of new service in the cause of the highest truth; "Judaism requires only the liberating breath in order to be rejuvenated from within," he once declared; the rejuvenation, and the regeneration of the ancient faith formed the burden of his thought; he was a modern prophet of Jewish universalism, a spiritual descendant of that ancient seer who pointed with undimmed vision to the coming of the day when "God will be One and His Name One."

MAX LILIENTHAL*

(1815-1915)

IT has become the laudable custom of our Conference to commemorate the centenaries of the birth of great Jewish leaders, notably such as were the outstanding figures in the early years of our liberal movement, by papers setting forth the salient facts of their life work and the distinguishing contributions they made to the service of progressive Jewish thought and endeavor. This year, 1915, marks the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of two leaders who contributed greatly towards making the record of liberal Judaism glorious, Samuel Hirsch, the philosopher, and Max Lilienthal, the conciliator. The duty of presenting the record of the fine service of the latter has been entrusted by his colleagues to the present speaker, the pupil, successor and biographer of him who was strikingly named during his lifetime and after his passing, the American Jewish Prince of Peace.

Max Lilienthal was born in Munich, Bavaria, on the sixteenth of October, 1815. His parents were in affluent circumstances and his father held a distinguished place in the Jewish community. According to a family tradition, the mother, who died while this son was in his teens, expressed the wish on her death-bed that he pursue the rabbinical career. With this end in view, the youth matriculated

*Centenary address at meeting of Central Conference of American Rabbis, July 4, 1915, at Charlevoix, Mich.

at the University of Munich and at the same time received instruction in the Hebrew branches of learning from Rabbi Moses Wittelsbacher. He also attended the famous *yeschibah* of Wolf Hamburger in Fuerth. He received the rabbinical degree from Hirsch Aub, rabbi of Munich.

Lilienthal passd so brilliant an examination in taking his degree at the University that he was offered a position in the diplomatic service. Although it had been his fixed purpose to follow the rabbinical career, still this offer was so attractive that he felt impelled to accept it, notably since, owing to the loss of the family possessions through a disastrous fire, he, as the eldest of the children, felt it incumbent upon him to assist in the rearing of his brothers and sisters. However, upon being informed that, if he accepted this post, he must become converted to Catholicism, he rejected the offer indignantly. This closed the incident, the minister of foreign affairs assuring him that such being his attitude, he could not possibly pursue a diplomatic career in Bavaria.

He turned definitely now to what had been his heart's desire from the first, the rabbinical office. But a change had come upon the government's legislation in the matter of filling these offices. The movement for religious reform was alarming the adherents of traditional Judaism. They succeeded in impressing the government with the dangerous tendencies of the "innovators," as the reformers were called. But in this bitter opposition to all religious reform, they were playing with fire; for the government was not satisfied with legislating against this alone, but, in 1838, an

edict was promulgated which re-enacted all the harshest mediaeval restrictive measures against the Jews. And in that same year the order was issued forbidding congregations from selecting as their rabbis, such candidates as held liberal views, or, as the exact words of the decree put it, "candidates favoring destructive neology". Whether or no this was the reason why Lilienthal did not succeed in securing a position, there is no means of knowing, but the fact remains that he never officiated as rabbi for a Bavarian congregation. His work was to lie in other lands.

In the year 1838 he began publishing in the columns of the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* a series of articles on the Hebrew manuscripts in the royal library of Munich. This literary work brought him into intimate connection with Dr. Ludwig Philippson, the editor of the journal in question. It was through this circumstance that the opening years of Lilienthal's active career were passed, not as rabbi in a small Bavarian Jewish congregation, but as the companion of statesmen and diplomats in the great Russian empire. For it was Ludwig Philippson, the best-known German Jew, to whom Uwaroff, the Russian Minister of Education, turned for advice as to who should be entrusted with the superintendency of the new school to be established in Riga, the beginning of the great task of modernizing the Jewish schools in Russia. And Ludwig Philippson recommended Max Lilienthal as the young man who, in his opinion, was best equipped for this pioneer work.

He left his father's house on the eighth of October,

1839, for the land which was to be his home during five eventful years. He had little conception of the difficulties of the work he was entering upon. It was only after he had been settled in the country for a short time that he began to realize the immensity of the task he had undertaken at the instance of Uwaroff. He had much to learn and he learned it at bitter cost. He was the first German Jew of prominence to come into close connection with the inner life of Russian Jewry. His fascinating account of his work in Russia entitled "My Travels in Russia", which, unfortunately is only a fragment, and his fine studies of the characteristics of the Russian Jew, published under the caption "Russian Sketches", contain the record of his work during these pioneer years and the impressions made upon him by his co-religionists in what was practically an unknown land to the Jews of western Europe. The great mass of Russian Jews had been touched in no way by the modern spirit; among them the rabbinical interpretation of the law held full sway. In the eighteenth century there had arisen in Russia the movement known as Chassidism, a protest against the rigorous legalism of rabbinical tradition; the sect of the *Chassidim*, noble and pure as were the motives of the founder, Israel Baal Shem, had degenerated into superstitious obscurantists whom the wonder working rabbis held in thrall. Still the effect of the newer efforts for secular education, so marked among German Jews since the days of Moses Mendelssohn, found an echo in some Jewish quarters in Russia. The men who headed these attempts to bring their co-religionists into accord

with the modern spirit are known as *Maskilim* and the movement which they sponsored, as the *Haskalah* movement. This movement was concerned largely with the effort to found schools in which the children and the youth should receive instruction in what we now call secular branches as well as in the traditional Hebrew disciplines, which had formed the entire content of their education hitherto. This *Haskalah* movement in Russia was the reflex of the Mendelssohnian movement in Germany, but the obstacles in Russia, both within from the Jewish communities and without from the government, were much greater and progress was therefore much more retarded.

The *Maskilim*, chief among whom was Isaac Baer Levinsohn, had made great efforts to modernize education among their co-religionists. One such modern school in Odessa was headed by Bezalel Stern, a native of Galicia.

In the year 1838 Count Uwaroff, the Minister of Education, came to Riga; the representatives of the Jewish congregation presented to him a petition requesting governmental permission to open a school in two sections, the one for boys and the other for girls, wherein the Jewish religion was to be taught systematically and instruction in the Bible to be given after the German translation of Mendelssohn; the superintendent was to be a foreigner of the Jewish faith who had been trained in the spirit of pure enlightenment; the assistant was to be a Christian. This petition found favor in the eyes of Uwaroff and he considered it of such interest and importance that he laid it before the Czar. Being favored by the Em-

peror, the request to found the school was ratified. Steps were taken at once to put the plan into operation. As the school was, by the action of the Emperor, under governmental protection, Uwaroff undertook to secure a capable superintendent; as already stated, through the recommendation of Ludwig Philippson, the choice fell upon Max Lilienthal.

This school was opened in Riga on January 16, 1840. Lilienthal delivered the inaugural address in German. The young director devoted himself to his task with the greatest enthusiasm. Secular as well as sacred branches were taught.

The congregation also elected Lilienthal preacher. His sermons delivered in the German language attracted large congregations of both Jews and Christians. The Jews recognized in a short time his earnestness and conscientiousness and the suspicions that they may have entertained soon disappeared. The rabbi of the community, a Talmudist of the old school, gave him a hearty welcome. Neither interfered with the sphere of the other. Lilienthal's fame spread beyond the confines of Riga. The *Maskilim* hailed him as a new and great leader. He entered into correspondence with a number of them, notably the famous M. A. Guenzberg and Nissin Rosenthal, the most prominent of the *Maskilim* of Vilna.

His great success in Riga made him a marked man. He was eulogized by the advocates of the newer education among the Russian Jews and denounced as a "Berliner" or "Datschel" and an innovator by the *Chassidim* and the followers of the old order. Uwaroff too, kept in constant touch with his work. After he

had been active in Riga a year, Lilienthal was called to St. Petersburg by the minister to inaugurate the larger task of founding schools in all the Russian Jewish communities like unto that which he had manned so successfully in Riga.

Before proceeding further with the narrative, it may be well to say a word about the purpose of the emperor and his ministers in this matter of founding modern schools for the Jews. Many Jews were suspicious of the sincerity of the government; they looked upon the whole plan as a proselytizing scheme. Such claimed that the emancipation of the Jews, and this alone, would prove the sincerity of the government in its educational projects for the Jews. The entire attitude of the Emperor justified them in their suspicions. His efforts as ruler were directed towards the realization of his motto: "One country, one language, one church". It was these justifiable suspicions which proved the most difficult obstacle for Lilienthal to overcome.

In one of his conversations with Uwaroff, Lilienthal communicated to the minister this fear of the Jews that the Emperor's educational plan was merely a blind for wholesale conversion and that it was not sincerely meant. When asked how these apprehensions might be removed, he answered, "To grant at once their emancipation; or, if the government considers this step a hasty one, to grant them at least some favors, convincing them unquestionably that their religious rights will not be infringed upon nor their liberties be curtailed further and that a bright, hopeful future is in store for them." Uwaroff now

assured him that the Emperor's intentions were only for the welfare of his Jewish subjects. That he trusted thoroughly in the representations of Uwaroff that there was no ulterior conversionist purpose in the plan, there can not be the least doubt, for as soon as, to his dismay, he became convinced to the contrary, he left the country, as shall appear shortly.

Lilienthal was entrusted with the task of persuading the Jews to accede to the governmental plan of establishing these schools for the young. He began his work along this line in Vilna where, largely through the active and enthusiastic support of Rosenthal, Klatzko and their friends among the *Maskilim*, Lilienthal succeeded in gaining the endorsement of the community for the governmental plan. From Vilna he proceeded to Minsk, having received an invitation from the Jewish leaders of that city to come there. The Jewish community of this city had shown no sympathy whatsoever with the *Haskalah* movement but quite the contrary; most active opposition had been evinced against any and all such attempts. Lilienthal's friends and admirers among the *Maskilim* of Vilna, fearing that the invitation to Minsk was a plot to lure him from Vilna and to devise some scheme against him that would prevent the further prosecution of his work, implored him not to proceed to that city. They pointed out to him that he would be friendless there and in a hotbed of opposition and enmity. He felt, however, so secure in the strength of his mission and his ability to present it, that he proceeded undaunted to the stronghold of *Chassidism* and rigid orthodoxy. Here his reception

was altogether different from that accorded to him in Vilna. He was bitterly insulted. It appeared at times that even his life was in danger. The fanatics mocked him, following him through the streets and shouting derisively "get thee gone, shaven one;[1] get thee gone". The meeting at which he set forth his plans was very stormy; all his eloquence availed him naught. He was utterly defeated.

The reactionaries carried the day and Lilienthal left Minsk to return to Vilna, feeling that the task he had undertaken would prove most difficult of fulfillment. The effect of his defeat at Minsk proved disastrous in Vilna. During his absence, his enemies had been active. They succeeded in reversing the sentiment of the community. Lilienthal, noting the change, asked that another meeting be called at which he might present his cause a second time, and possibly win over the people once again. He pleaded in vain. No second assembly was called. His experience in Minsk and his second attempt at Vilna convinced him that he must labor hard indeed to gain the Jewish communities for his cause.

He returned to St. Petersburg. Here, in conjunction with the department of the Ministry of Education, he worked out the plan for the organization of Jewish education. As a result of these deliberations, an edict was promulgated, the chief provision of which was that a commission of four members was to be elected by the Jews themselves which commission

[1] Being clean shaven, Lilienthal was looked upon with suspicion by the Russian Jews, who carried out literally the command, Lev. XIX, 27.

was to work out the plan for the reorganization of the Jewish schools.

Lilienthal was commissioned to visit the Jewish communities of Russia to acquaint them with the provisions of this edict, to induce them to accede peaceably to the governmental plan and to elect the members of the rabbinical commission as provided for in the edict. He was to undertake this journey as the representative of the Government; his journey was to proceed through all the provinces inhabited by the Jews.

In the fourth paragraph of the letter of instructions issued to him, the assurance is given that the religion of the Jews was not to be interfered with. Lilienthal had demanded that this be included in order that all suspicions might be dispelled and the consent of the Jews be thus obtained the more readily.

Before embarking on this all important journey, he issued his famous address to the Russian Jews entitled *"Maggid Yeshuah"*[2] (The Announcer of

[2] The address called forth an anonymous rejoinder entitled *"Maggid Emeth"* (The Announcer of the Truth). The writer of this answer is actuated by a bitter spirit of enmity and opposition to Lilienthal; he claims that Lilienthal desired merely to ingratiate himself with the rich, and that he was hypocritical in that he was most punctilious in observing every ceremony in order to curry favor with the orthodox. Kahana, whose article on Lilienthal and the *Haskalah* (in *Hashiloach* XXVII, 314-22, 446-57, 546-56) is distinctly antagonistic, claims that this rejoinder was written by the famous *Maskil*, M. A. Guenzberg, to whom Lilienthal showed himself most ungrateful after Guenzberg had aided him with his influence. It has been pointed out that M. A. Guenzberg could not have written this rejoinder, because, in a later publication, *Kikayon Deyonah*, he criticizes the *Maggid*

Salvation). This remarkable document created a great stir among the Jews of Russia. It was in this address to his co-religionists that he announced the purpose of the government to convene the Commission on Jewish education that was to have four members elected by the Jews themselves who were to work out the plan for the schools which were to be established for the education of the Jewish young. He called upon his co-religionists to take advantage of the humane and well-intentioned purposes of the government. If they failed to avail themselves of this great opportunity their enemies would find comfort and justification in the claim that the wretched condition of the Russian Jews was their own fault and was due to their ignorance and superstition.

Lilienthal started forth on what may be called his propagandist journey to win the Jews to the governmental plan of reforming the Jewish educational system toward the end of July, 1842. His progress was almost in the nature of a triumphal march. He visited all the important cities in the provinces inhabited by Jews. He won them over to the government's plan. As a result of his journey, the Jews elected as the members of the Commission, Rabbi Isaac ben Chayim, head of the *yeshibah* of Volishin, the most celebrated Jewish seat of learning in Russia;

Emeth for the attack on Lilienthal. (Scheinhaus, *Ein deutscher Pionier*). Either Scheinhaus is correct in his contention, which seems most probable, or, if not, and Guenzberg did write the *Maggid Emeth*, his later statements must be considered in the light of a retraction of the *Maggid Emeth*, involving thus a clearing of Lilienthal from the charges there made.

Mendel Schneersohn, a leader of the *Chassidim*; Michael Heilprin, a banker of Berdichef; and Bezalel Stern, the superintendent of the school at Odessa. Lilienthal also sat with the Commission.

The commission began its meetings in April, 1843 and continued in session till August. Naturally there had to be much give and take. It had been hoped that a complete understanding would be reached, but this did not prove to be the case. The men forming the Commission were far apart in their views. The discussions were heated. Rabbi Isaac and the Chassidaic leader, Mendel Schneersohn, were not in sympathy. Stern and Lilienthal indulged in vigorous debates. Still, in the end, all the members of the Commission signed the report embodying the desires of the government as to the establishment of schools of the character of those already existing in Riga and Odessa. The Commission also placed its approval upon the books to be used in the schools, a list of which had been submitted to them.

The edict for the establishment of these schools was issued on November 13, 1844. It had been understood that the schools were to be superintended by Jewish scholars to be imported from Germany. In fact, Lilienthal had received assurances from many such of their willingness to undertake this work. However, when the schools were finally opened, this plan of Lilienthal's which had been approved by Uwaroff was repudiated by the government even though as many as two hundred German Jewish teachers had signified their willingness to come to Russia to help along this work. Such a procedure ill

comported with the Czar's program of russification. Instead of importing German teachers, it was decided to follow the plan of the Russian schools, patterning the elementary schools after the parochial schools, the higher schools after the district schools and the rabbinical seminaries after the seminaries of the Greek Church.

The truth of the matter was that faith was not kept with Lilienthal. Despite the assurances of Uwaroff and other high officials that there was no desire to convert the Jews by the establishment of these schools, it appeared in the sequel that these assurances were not sincere. Uwaroff's first plans for the education of the Jews were kept secret and were not published for some time; they were unknown to Lilienthal. In this document Uwaroff stated that instruction in the specific Jewish branches must be minimized so that the present Jewish educational methods may be displaced by instruction in the catechism; instruction in the Talmud was to be only a pretense and the religious and philosophical Jewish commentaries were to be dropped at the first opportunity.[3]

It may be that, because of his contact with Lilienthal, Uwaroff may have changed his ideas as expressed in this original plan and have been sincere in the assurances he gave that there was no desire to proselytize. This may account for the fact that the edict of November, 1844, was scarcely promulgated ere Uwaroff was relieved of his office and the carrying

[3] See Scheinhaus, Ein deutscher Pionier, *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, 1911, p. 439.

out of the plan committed to other men who had had no share in the initial work. These men had no appreciation of the situation. When the schools were finally established, Christians were made inspectors. These inspectors had no conception of the delicacy and seriousness of the task. They had no sympathy with the work as far as it was in the interest of the Jews. True, the teachers of the Jewish branches were Jews. Many of these were incompetent. Such as were capable had constant difficulties, on the one hand, with the Christian inspectors and, on the other hand, with the *Melammedim*, or old style Jewish teachers, whose occupation was seriously interfered with by the establishment of these schools.

Further, several new edicts against the Jews were issued during this period, notably the dread ukase by which Nicholas I delimited the dwelling places of the Jews to within fifty versts of the frontier, the source of untold suffering and inhuman repression. The leopard had not changed his spots despite the seeming good will expressed in the documents concerned with the government's educational plans for the Jews.

Little wonder then that the Jews had their suspicions reawakened as to the sincerity of the government's professions. Little wonder, too, that Lilienthal gradually awakened to the fact that the government's pretended interest in the Jews was hypocritical. The great work for the welfare of his co-religionists on which he had embarked with such high hopes and such glowing enthusiasm had fallen far short of his expectations. Still he was willing to remain in Russia

and to work for and with his co-religionists. He had been elected preacher of the great congregation in Odessa, a post, however, which he did not enter upon.

In December, 1844, he had written his fiancée Miss Pepi Nettre of Munich, to make ready for their marriage in the following May. In this letter he advised her to provide herself with heavy furs required by the rigors of the Russian climate. It was evidently his intention to bring his bride to Russia. What was it, then, that made him decide to go to America instead of returning to Russia after his marriage as was surely his intention at the time this letter was written?

In a recent book on Lilienthal's work in Russia, it is stated that the reason which impelled him to leave the country suddenly was that he was approached with the proposal to become a convert to the Greek Catholic Church.[4] If this is true, as is possible, one can well imagine the indignation with which the suggestion was received. That some such impression was abroad at the time appears from a contemporary statement. In a communication from Koenigsberg on the situation of the Jews in Russia in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of December 31, 1845, the writer says: "Dr. Lilienthal himself, who sojourned in St. Petersburg for a number of years with the purpose of promulgating foreign culture in Russia, was compelled to emigrate to America, when he recognized finally that it was impossible for him to achieve

[4] Hessen, *Die russische Regierung und die westeuropaeische Juden*, 33; St. Petersburg, 1913.

any real results for the improvement of the lot of his co-religionists owing to the repressive laws of the country and when the attempt was made to persuade him himself to become converted to the state church"[5] A statement in a letter which he wrote to his friend, Dr. Ludwig Philippson, shortly after his arrival in the United States seems to bear out this report; the opening paragraph of that communication, dated December 31, 1845, reads: "The Lord to whom I sacrificed my position in Russia, for whose holy name I surrendered livelihood, honors and a life position, He, the Father of all, to whom I entrusted my fate, and who forsakes none who trust in Him, has helped me in His mercy and has given me a second great sphere of activity."[6]

A writer in the Jewish periodical, the *Orient*, had for years pursued Lilienthal with bitter diatribes and base insinuations, among them being the outrageous charge that he was responsible for the promulgation of the anti-Jewish ukase, inasmuch as he did not really sympathize with the Russian Jews but was more or less an agent of the government. These statements led Philippson to affix the following editorial comment to Lilienthal's statement quoted above: "We cannot refrain from calling the attention of the public to the fact that this letter is a complete reply to the shameless invectives which a Jewish newspaper has directed for years at Dr. Lilienthal. Would that the opportunity were always at hand to

[5] Article reproduced in *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, X, p. 56.

[6] Ibid, p. 98.

prove the groundlessness of similar slanders in so short and so complete a manner."

Whatever may have been the immediate reason for his departure, there can be no doubt that he had become convinced of the insincerity of the Russian government in the matter of the welfare of the Jews. True, the educational system, for the introduction of which he had labored with might and main, was established after a fashion, but, oh, so differently from what he had intended. His bright dreams for a real renaissance among Russian Jews vanished into thin air. Thoroughly disheartened and discouraged he left Russia for Munich where he married the fine woman to whom he had been betrothed many years and with whom he left for the United States where he arrived in November, 1845, shortly after he had attained his thirtieth year. Though so young, he was one of the best known Jewish leaders in the world. He came to the United States with a great reputation. His career in Russia had made him a man of mark.

In appearance Lilienthal was every inch the leader; he was tall and stately and his demeanor gave evidence of the courtly surroundings in which he had moved for years. A man of culture and force, he soon began to make his influence felt in his new home. Leaders in Jewry were few in the United States in those days. Although there were not many congregations, still there were fewer rabbis. Religious affairs were in a chaotic condition.

Despite the unpromising state of affairs in Jewish congregational life, Lilienthal indulged the greatest hopes for the Jew and Judaism in the United States

from the very moment that he stepped foot upon these shores. One of the dominating features of his activity was his love of America, as the home of religious liberty and the land of freedom. He was intense in this and time and again, in spoken address and written word, he eulogized the American spirit. This was due possibly to his Russian career. The contrast in his own experience between Russian despotism and American liberty was so great that it could not but color all his thoughts and acts. He appreciated to the full all that America represented for humanity. The first recorded words that he wrote from the United States indicate this clearly and sound the first clear note in that hymn of praise of America which he continued intoning to the very end of his life. In a letter written to his friend, Ludwig Philippson, very shortly after his arrival, he says: "My fraternal and friendly greetings from New York, from the blessed land of freedom, the beautiful soil of civic equality! Old Europe with its restrictions lies behind me like a dream; the memory of the repellent Judaeophobia of Russia is like a distant mirage; the frightful images of oppression and persecution are distant from the harried soul—I breathe freely once more, my spirit unfolds its pinions and I would waft exultingly the heartiest kiss of brotherhood to all men who find here the bond of union! . . . Oh, it is necessary that you breathe this free air of Columbia in order that you may be able to understand the pride and joy of her children; you must have shaken off the centuried dust of the old Jewish oppression in order to appre-

ciate to the full the feeling, 'I am a man like every other'; you must see here our Jewish brethren, the persecuted emigrants of persecuting Europe, in order to become convinced how worthily the Jew co-operates with his Christian brethren here . . ."

He was elected rabbi by three congregations of New York, and was styled on this account chief rabbi. In his inaugural sermon he expressed his disapproval of the innovations introduced by the reform rabbis of Germany. In his first official utterance on American soil, Lilienthal took his stand on the basis of tradition, but he stated that although he would keep aloof from innovations, he would aim at securing decorum at the services. Lilienthal's later championing of reform caused him to be accused of inconsistency owing to his utterances in this inaugural and other sermons preached in New York. It will be well to make this matter clear at the outset. Although he thus began as a sympathizer with what is known as orthodoxy, still, as he became better acquainted with American conditions, he recognized the need of reform. In other words, he grew in liberal religious thought as the years advanced. He was a conservative reformer, if such a seemingly paradoxical phrase is permissible, to the end of his life. It was at first his belief that reforms could find their warrant in the Talmud, and he wrote copiously to this effect although later he abandoned this attempt. As time went on he became more and more outspoken in his reform position, as we shall see. But he was above all, a man of peace and in the many bitter contentions that marred the relations of the reform leaders, in

the third quarter of the nineteenth century, Lilienthal stood out as the peace-maker who attempted to smooth over the bitter expressions of the fiery hot-spurs. His motto was quiet development and orderly progress.

What he once called the "gift of quiet, though by no means inactive, looking on," well describes his own attitude, notably during these early years. Though unsympathetic with radical measures, he introduced, almost at the start, such reforms as he felt were necessary to make a religious appeal to a generation imbued with the spirit of free institutions. He preached regularly in German; in place of the *hanoten yeschuah*, the prayer composed for monarchial conditions, he substituted a new prayer appropriate to the republican form of government. He organized a choir and formed a confirmation class; this was the first to be confirmed in the United States: the feast of Shabuoth, 1846, was the date of this first confirmation. In speaking of these reforms, he wrote: "Thus I hope, with God's help, to place our young congregations here, in all things that touch our holy religion, on an equal footing with the best organized congregations in the old world."[7]

However, Lilienthal's chief work in America was to be performed not in New York, but in what was then a far western city. He had resigned his position as rabbi of the three congregations and had opened a school which was attended by boys from various cities of the country, Cincinnati among others. When the Bene Israel congregation of that city sought a

[7] *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, Ibid. p. 289-90.

rabbi, the fathers of these boys, members of this congregation, urged the selection of Dr. Lilienthal. He preached his inaugural sermon before this congregation on July 14, 1855. The final stage of his career opened with his arrival in the western city. He became associated here with Isaac M. Wise, who had come to the city a year previously. Together these two great leaders toiled, each however, in his own way, for they were far different in disposition,, character and method. Through their united work in the cause of Judaism, Cincinnati secured a pre-eminent place among the Jewish communities of the country. The names of these two men are linked together for all time in the story of the further development of Judaism not only in the city which became their home, but also in the entire country.

As rabbi of the Bene Israel congregation, Lilienthal unfolded a blessed career during the next twenty-seven years. Not only in the congregation, but in the city and the country at large he held a commanding place.

When he took charge of the congregation, it was orthodox in its form of worship and in its practices. He set himself at once to the task of introducing some reforms which tended to make the service more decorous. Shortly after his arrival in Cincinnati, the congregation voted to abolish the sale of *Mitzwoth*, the reading of *piyyutim* in the Sabbath service, as well as the reading of the sections *Ezehu Mekamon*, *Bameh madlikin* and *Pitum hakkatoreth*. This action aroused the bitter opposition of a section of the membership, which opposition grew during the following months because of the advocacy by the rabbi of

the necessity of moderate reforms, notably of such a nature as would appeal to the rising youth born and bred in the free American environment. Not only from the pulpit did he give expression to these thoughts, but also in the columns of the Israelite, in the editing of which he was associated with Isaac M. Wise, the founder, during the years 1855 and 1856.

"Religion and life must be reconciled, is the supreme demand of our times and the just issue of all proposed reforms," he wrote at this period of his career and shortly thereafter in a similar strain, "Let us assist time in its travail for the birth of the future. Let us prepare and foster progress. Let us remove abuses by enlightenment and instruction and an impartial posterity will gratefully acknowledge our sincere and faithful endeavors."[8] The irreconcilables in the congregation, however, were not to be won over. The climax came when the rabbi refused to be present at the service on *Tisha beab*, the feast commemorative of the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem. Members that had been antagonizing all reforms withdrew and formed the She'erith Israel congregation. Lilienthal based his refusal to participate in this service on the ground that the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem by the Romans in the year 70, with the accompanying loss of Jewish nationality, should not be observed by a service of lamentation and fasting, for this catastrophe was really providential, inasmuch as it was the beginning of the world mission of the Jews. The loss of a separate Jewish nationality was the necessary preliminary to the universal Jewish

[8] Israelite, III, 292.

mission in all portions of the earth. Throughout his life Lilienthal remained true to this conception, which is in fact the accepted teaching of reform Judaism. Time and again he reiterated this thought; on many important occasions he stated it; the two greatest events in the life of the congregation during his service were the dedication of the new temple at Mound and Eighth Streets and the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of his service as rabbi; in his dedication sermon he used these words: "We owe no longer any allegiance to Jerusalem, save the respect all enlightened nations pay to this cradle of all civilizing religions. We cherish no longer any desire for a return to Palestine, but proudly and gratefully exclaim with the Psalmist, 'Here is my resting place; here shall I reside; for I love this place."[9] In the anniversary address he emphasized the fact that the reform congregations had eliminated from the prayer book "all sentences referring to a return to Palestine, to the rebuilding of the temple with its sacrifices, referring to the dark times of persecution and mutual aversion",[10] and in his address at the convention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations held in Washington in the centennial year of American Independence, he declared that "modern Judaism does neither dream nor wish to return to Palestine; here is our home; here our fatherland. Hence we strike from all bequeathed prayer books any line that reminds us of the temple and sacrifices; we know that the best religion is humanity, the best divine service,

[9] Israelite, XVI, No. 10, (September 3, 1868) p. 8.
[10] Israelite, XXVII, No. 52.

love thy neighbor as thyself; the motto which we inscribe on our banner is the common fatherhood of God and the common brotherhood of man."[11]

The universalism of Judaism formed thus the burden of his preaching and his teaching. To his mind the reform movement emphasized this.

Outside of the congregation Dr. Lilienthal performed yeoman's service for the cause of Judaism at large. He was a prominent figure at all the rabbinical conferences held in this country during his lifetime.

Shortly after his arrival in Cincinnati, a call was issued for a conference of rabbis at Cleveland. The conference which was held in the month of October, 1855, instead of becoming, as was hoped, the bond of union for all the rabbis, resulted in most unfortunate dissensions, the effect of which lasted for a quarter of a century. The statement of principles adopted by the rabbis at Cleveland called forth bitter protests from the Emanuel congregation of New York and the Har Sinai congregation of Baltimore. David Einhorn, the rabbi of the latter congregation, who had arrived in this country a short time previously, was the moving spirit in this protest. The protests were published in his magazine, *Sinai*, and he himself arraigned sharply the resolutions adopted at the conference. Opposition was voiced, however, not only by Einhorn, the radical reformer, but also by Isaac Leeser, the foremost orthodox rabbi of the country. Leeser, who had at first expressed himself favorably concerning the plan of a conference of all the rabbis of the country, found it impossible, after

[11] Ibid, XXIII, No. 2.

the conference had taken place, to endorse what was done there because of the reforming tendency of the men at Cleveland. The results of the conference were, therefore, most unfortunate. Lilienthal, who had been secretary of the conference, took up the gauntlet thrown down by Einhorn on the one hand, and Leeser on the other, and defended the work of the Cleveland conference in the columns of the Israelite, of which he was the associate editor at the time. In an article entitled, "The Parties," he characterized the division among the rabbis as uncompromising orthodoxy, represented by "The Occident;" uncompromising reform, represented by "Sinai" and practical possible reform, represented by "The Israelite" and the Cleveland conference.[12]

In another article entitled, "Let Us Alone," he wrote in discouraged strain concerning these differences, each party following its own way and wishing neither co-operation nor union. Still, he is not altogether dismayed; for he closes with the words, "Let us not despair. The golden rays of eternal truth soon will drive away the intangible shadows of the uneasy twilight and out of the present dissension will be born a higher state of peace and union!"

This hope was not to be realized for many years. Fourteen years elapsed ere the reformers of the eastern section of the country and the reformers of the west met together. This joint meeting took place at Philadelphia, in November, 1869, when Einhorn, Samuel Hirsch, Samuel Adler, and other rabbinical leaders of the East, met together with Wise and

[12] Israelite, III, No. 12, p. 12.

Lilienthal and other western rabbis. This conference adopted a declaration of principles in which all present agreed. Peace seemed to have settled where there had been discord. But it was not a lasting peace.

Other conferences were held during the next few years in Cleveland, New York, and Cincinnati; but strenuous as were the efforts put forth by the great conciliator to effect peace, these did not prove successful at the time. However, he did not despair and happily he succeeded in his efforts when, upon his initiative, the Rabbinical Literary Association was formed in 1879. This association comprised within its membership most of the reform rabbis of the country. Lilienthal was its president from the time of its formation to the day of his death. What importance he attached to this achievement appears from his reference to it in his sermon on the Day of Atonement following its organization, when he said:

"I hope it (the Rabbinical Literary Association) shall be the crowning point of the years I have spent in my holy and responsible office. The rabbis and ministers of our whole country have agreed to meet once every year, earnestly to discuss the religious questions and to give their opinions and decisions. It is not the work of a day or a year; it needs earnest and conscientious study, ample investigation, serious and fraternal discussions; and with the assistance of God and the hearty co-operation of our co-religionists, we hope in the course of time to accomplish a noble and holy work."

He did, indeed, devote much time and attention

to the association which met annually during the remaining short period of his life. He edited the quarterly journal issued by the association under the name, *The Hebrew Review*. He published a number of articles in this review, namely, the two presidential addresses and the articles, "The Jew a Riddle" and "The Blood Covenant."

The Review suspended publication after his death. Only two volumes appeared. In speaking of his literary work, mention must be made also of several earlier publications, viz.: his translation of Hecht's Biblical History[13] and his volume of poems, "Freiheit, Fruehling und Liebe",[14] a collection of beautiful lyrics elevated in feeling, noble in thought and choice in expression. Reference must also be made to his founding of the *Sabbath Visitor*, the first paper for Jewish children to be established in this country. He founded this journal in 1874 and edited it till the day of his death.

He stood shoulder to shoulder with Isaac M. Wise in the latter's great work of founding the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Hebrew Union College. His own congregation was one of the very first to join the Union and he served as a member of the Board of Governors and of the Faculty of the Hebrew Union College from the days of its opening. When the hopes of many years were

[13] Synopsis of the History of the Israelites from the time of Alexander the Macedonian to the Present Age, translated from the German of E. Hecht—Enlarged and Improved by Rev. Dr. Lilienthal, Cincinnati, 1858.

[14] Cincinnati, 1857.

realized and a rabbinical college was successfully established, a thanksgiving service to mark the event was held at the Plum Street Temple, in Cincinnati. Dr. Lilienthal was the spokesman for the Board of Governors. In this notable address he uttered many significant words, some of which may be reproduced:

"We could have adopted the plan proposed by several good men, of sending those who wish to devote themselves to the Jewish ministry to Germany, where the master minds of Jewish theology and literature are diffusing their stores of learning to crowds of Jewish students, and where Jewish colleges are already fully established, thoroughly organized, and richly endowed. But we do not want any ministers reared and educated under the influence of European institutions; we intend to have ministers reared by our glorious American institutions, men who love their country above all, men who will be staunch advocates of such civil and religious liberty as the men who signed the Declaration of Independence understood it, men who are ready to defend this priceless gem against all and any encroachments, and hence we wish to keep our students at home and raise them as genuine Americans on the virgin soil of American liberty."

The American note which is struck in this address was predominant in all his teaching and preaching, yes, in all his activity. Never was there a man more devoted in his love of America and all that this country represents than was Max Lilienthal. This was a passion with him. He abhorred every form and

expression of intolerance whether religious or civil; he was an American of the Americans, even though of German birth; time and time again he gave expression to his deep feelings and convictions on the subject of religious liberty. He never minced his words when the occasion arose to denounce movements that aimed at a union of church and state, at Christianizing this country or the public schools. He was as a watchman on the tower of liberty, calling attention to dangers that threatened this precious stronghold. Intense in his Judaism on the one hand, and his Americanism on the other, he embodied the loftiest type of the American Jew. The service that he accomplished in making clear the attitude of the American Jew was great. In his day, as unfortunately is the case still now, there were many who considered the Jew an alien; he made very clear in spoken discourse and written word that in all things except his religion, the Jew was the same as his Christian fellow citizen; that he is actuated by the same love of country, the same enthusiasm for American ideals; that America is his fatherland which he loves as he does his home. Therefore, as has already been pointed out, he took pains to declare so frequently that Palestine, precious though it be as a memory, is no longer the fatherland of the Jew; I believe that it may be said without fear of contradiction that had he lived to see the day of the birth of the Zionistic movement whose program is the re-establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, he would have opposed and fought this with all his might; for his whole life had been devoted to teaching just the contrary; he con-

sidered the Palestinian period of Jewish history the preparatory stage for the larger life of Judaism throughout the world; he looked upon the dispersion as ordained by Providence and, in the modern era of freedom and emancipation, notably as achieved in the United States, he recognized the beginning of the fulfillment of the high hopes of the seers for the coming of the day of the realization among men of the belief in the common Fatherhood of God and the common brotherhood of men. He was a true prophet of humanity, a real worker for peace, goodwill and fellowship among all men of whatever origin or belief, whatever race or creed. Because America to his mind symbolized this high doctrine, he was so jealous of America's honor as the home of true liberty in its every sense, so proud of his American citizenship and so appreciative of his American opportunities.

For him there could be no question concerning the loyalty of the Jew to his country; the statement made in his address at the laying of the corner stone of the Mound Street Temple, Cincinnati, and repeated several years later in a Thanksgiving sermon on November 24, 1870, caused quite a sensation because it put the matter in question in so blunt a fashion. He said:

"Let us, then, be proud of our country, our flag, our institutions and our name. Let us give sincere thanks that we all, native and adopted citizens, can join in one grand chorus of praise and exultation. Let us promise to-day, first and above all, we will be and remain Americans in sentiment, word and deed! First Americans and then Jews, Catholics, Protestants

or members of whatever denomination any man may choose, according to the dictates of his conscience!"[15]

Without doubt this closing paragraph, "First Americans, and then Jews, Protestants, Catholics etc.," the paragraph which caused the excited comment, was inspired by the agitation aroused at that time by various movements in the country; the Vatican Council of 1869, which set its seal on the doctrine of papal infallibility had brought to the fore the question of the priority of Catholic allegiance, whether to the authority of the pope or the country. Protestant sectaries were doing all they could to have the Protestant religion recognized as the religion of the government; if not so recognized, to whom, then, was the Protestant's allegiance due in the first instance, the Church or the State? Without doubt it was the discussions of the day that caused the great American rabbi to express himself as unequivocally as he did upon this subject.

In season and out of season he insisted that all should have the right to believe as they would and none should be interfered with in the pursuance of that right. In accordance with this conviction, he formulated his definition of the American Jew, "In creed a monotheist, in descent a Hebrew, Israelite or Jew, in all other public or private relations, an American Citizen."[16] Therefore at the dedication of the Mound Street Temple, as spokesman for his congregation and all American Jews who believed with him, he stated the political creed of the American

[15] Israelite, XVII, Dec. 2, 1870, p. 8.

[16] Jewish Times, (New York)Dec. 10, 1869, p. 5.

Jew thus exaltedly: "We are promising to-day in a body that forever we shall remain true to the sublime spirit of our constitution as it stands and reads. We shall spare no effort to maintain the free and glorious institutions of our country. In a body we shall resist the encroachment of any denomination on the rights and titles of the modern state and society . . . Earnestly and sincerely we promise unanimously to support any measure intended to strengthen the institutions bequeathed unto us by the noble spirit of the fathers of this land, which enjoins upon every citizen as a supreme duty to live together as brethren indeed and to foster that spirit of toleration by which every creed being treated by all with unprejudiced and mutual regard, the glory of our land will be enhanced all over the world."

I wish I had the time to present at length his remarkable service in the matter of loyalty to the American principle of the separation of Church and State. He spoke ever and always in no uncertain terms when attempts were made either by Catholics or Protestants to endanger this fundamental principle. In the year 1870, a Protestant ministers' conference determined to petition Congress to insert the name of God in the constitution and to delcare this a Christian nation. As a result this vigilant champion of American principles preached a sermon on the subject, "God, Religion and our American Constitution." Perhaps the argument against the proposition that this is a Christian country has never been more cogently put than in this sermon, so that the portion especially pertinent to the subject in hand may be quoted. The preacher began by asking:

"What do the reverend gentlemen mean and intend by inserting the name of God into our Constitution? Was the Almighty ruler of all nations less God and Father because His holy name was not mentioned in that holy instrument? Was he less worshipped, less revered and adored by the American people, because the Fathers of 1776 wisely refrained from meddling with religious matters?

"Yes, what do they mean and intend, by trying to declare by a new amendment to the Constitution, this nation to be a Christian nation? * * *

"What kind of a Christian nation shall this people be, according to the desire of these reverend gentlemen, a Catholic or a Protestant one? Which one? These gentlemen do not come out in their true colors; they, of course, mean a Protestant Christian nation. They have as yet too much genuine regard for the American spirit of religious liberty that they shall come forward and declare, 'We mean a Protestant Christian nation.' But do not they by this assertion throw down the gauntlet to the Catholic Church, which ever increases in power and challenge her to a deadly combat? Or do they presume to avert by such a declaration the dangers they fear from the ever increasing influence of the Catholic clergy? Do they pretend to put a check on the formidable growth of that Church by adding such an amendment to the Constitution?

They will accomplish thereby neither the one nor the other. They will only add fuel to the threatening fire and put the denominational antagonists into a well-defined array; they will thereby only drill and

prepare them for a contest which by such agitations will rather be accelerated than avoided."

Before I dismiss the discussion of this phase of his activity, reference must be made to the famous Cincinnati "Bible in the schools" case.

The Cincinnati school board had resolved that the reading of the Bible in the public schools should be dispensed with. A citizen brought suit in the courts against the school board. The courts finally sustained the Board. While the case was being tried, great excitement prevailed in the community and the attention of the entire country was fastened upon the Cincinnati episode. In that city itself passion ran high. Public meetings were held by both the friends and the opponents of the school board. As may well be supposed, among the most active spuporters of the school board was Dr. Lilienthal, for whom the question of Bible reading in the public schools was part and parcel of the larger issue of the union of Church and State. Little wonder, therefore, that he took an active part in the campaign for keeping the public schools free from all church affiliation. He recognized that the reading of the Bible in the schools was merely the opening wedge for the protestantizing of the schools. In an address delivered at Mozart Hall, March 30, 1870, during the exciting interim that elapsed after the Superior Court had decided against the School Board and the case was pending in the supreme Court of the State to which the School Board carried it and where the decision sustaining the Board in its right to suspend the reading of the Bible in the schools was ultimately rendered, the

rabbi whose words carried great weight in the community said pointedly:

"The Catholics denounce the public schools as godless and the hotbed of every vice and apply every opprobrious epithet to them. They demand a division of the school fund. What is to be done? Sectarianism must be removed from the schools, in order that there may be no just ground left for this demand. But look to the Protestant side. The Protestants come now and say defiantly that this is a Protestant country. When I left Europe I came to this country because I believed it to be free, the God-blessed country of all the world.

"One one side of this controversy are the Protestants, and on the other are the Catholics. Where in heaven's name are the Americans? Of course, the answer from the Protestants will be, 'We Protestants are the Americans, and we Americans are Protestants.' I do not propose to answer the question myself, but instead will read from a letter written by Washington in May, 1789, adressed to the United Baptist Churches of Virginia: "If I could have entertained the slightest apprehension that the Constitution framed in convention where I had the honor to preside, might possibly injure the rights of any ecclesiastical society, certainly I would never have placed my signature to it; and if I could now conceive that the General Government might ever be so administered as to render the liberty of conscience insecure, I beg you will be persuaded that no one would be more zealous than myself to establish effectual barriers against the horrors of spiritual tyranny and every

species of religious persecution, for you doubtless remember that I have often expressed my sentiments that every man conducting himself as a citizen and being accountable to God alone for his religious opinions, ought to be protected in worshipping the Deity according to the dictates of his conscience."

"So wrote Washington. Are we better than he was? Are we wiser than he was? Obstinacy is no wisdom, bigotry is no justice, fanaticism is no righteousness, and any one who unfolds these banners will ruin this glorious country."

And as a final word, let me quote the platform which he laid down for the Jews in this matter:

1. "Bible or no Bible, our children will visit the public schools. Our Sabbath schools and synagogues give us ample room and time to impart to them the required religious instruction.

2. No division of the school fund, no matter under what pretext it may be demanded.

3. Not a single penny out of the public funds for the support of any sectarian institution, be it for charital le or educational purposes.

4. No union of State and Church under any shape and form whatsoever.

These principles will save the Union and restore the denominational peace we have heretofore enjoyed and which we hope will be continued for ever more on the virgin soil of American happiness and liberty."[17]

Thus bravely, fearlessly and constantly did this true American patriot contend for the principles to which he was devoted with all his heart and soul.

[17] Jewish Times, 1870, pp. 118 and 213.

Advocate of peace among all men and notably among the followers of the various religious denominations though he was, yet he never permitted his desire for peace to becloud the issue when underlying principles of liberty were at stake. And his great services in this cause will never be forgotten.

Despite this firm and uncompromising attitude against both Protestant and Catholic sectarians, Dr. Lilienthal was a veritable messenger of peace in advancing the cause of fellowship among the various denominations. Never has there been a man in the American Jewish pulpit who has performed finer service in this regard. He preached frequently from Christian pulpits. He delivered, too, the address at the Fair for the raising of funds for the Catholic institution, the Good Samaritan Hospital. Thus he contributed wonderfully towards creating a sentiment of good will amongthe followers of all religious denominations in the city. Dr. Wise summed up this service in a beautiful tribute to his friend on the occasion of the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the latter's service as rabbi of his congregation, when he said:

"There are, I have no doubt, many persons within hearing distance, who recollect the various prejudices which existed also in this enlightened city between Jew and Gentile. It is not the will of God, who is the common Father of all; it is not the teaching of Judaism, with its great law of 'Love they neighbor as thyself,' that such prejudices and dissensions and mutual distrust should exist among good people; and by the will of God, and let me add, by the beneficent in-

fluence of Rev. Dr. Lilienthal, most of these prejudices were eradicated in this city. 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that publisheth peace.' He approached priest and layman, Christian and infidel, church and society with the palm branch of peace, soothed and calmed agitated minds, carried light into obscure recesses and good will into many hearts. Therefore, to a great extent we enjoy here this peace and mutual respect, this good understanding between Jew and Gentile, which is our pride and satisfaction, and for which we are largely indebted to the man of whom we say, 'Thou art peace,' therefore, 'thy house is peace.' "

Dr. Lilienthal then was animated throughout his life by the peace motive. He had a fine knowledge of men. He knew that in life there must be give and take if anything is to be accomplished. This was the statesmanlike quality in his make-up. He felt that men had to be taken as they are, not as he would have had them be. For this reason those who did not understand him, accused him of compromising, of hyprocrisy and of time serving. When, in Russia, in his desire to gain the support of the ultra-orthodox Jews and of the *Chassidim* for the high aim towards which he was striving, he observed rites and customs with which he was known to be at variance in his thought, he was denounced as a hyprocrite by his enemies; but the truth of the matter was that he considered such a concession as of slight importance when compared with the large end in view, namely, the obtaining of the sympathy of this great section of Russian Jewry for the educational work proposed.

So also time and again in this country, he was accused of being a compromiser, on the one hand, by the reformers who made a fetich of consistency, and on the other, by orthodox irreconcilables who would not have a jot or tittle of inherited ceremonies and customs changed. Being a man of great insight and wisdom, he recognized that practical reforms can be accomplished effectively by an accommodation to the changing circumstances of time and place. He knew full well that neither life nor history move in a straight line and that the greatest victories for progress are frequently gained by a rounding of difficulties and obstacles by circuitous routes. But, when a matter of real principle was involved, he showed time and again that he could be firm as a rock; his departure from Russia, relinquishing a great future proved this to the full; his defense of the reform movement against his doughty antagonist, the Rev. Isaac Leeser, and his constant struggle as detailed in the preceding pages against the forces of religious bigotry in their onslaught on the integrity of American institutions bear testimony to his consistency when high principle was at stake.

Throughout his career he aimed to smooth the rough waters of controversy and dissension. For this reason he was called so frequently even during his lifetime, the prince of peace. He was distressed by the factious differences that divided his brethren in the ministry into warring groups. He used his best offices to remove these differences. More than this could no man do. He was truly one of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace.

For thirty-seven years he worked in this spirit of peace and reconciliation in the land of his love and adoption. This is his greatest claim to fame and to the gratitude of his co-religionists and his fellow countrymen.

When the last hour of his earthly life struck on the fifth day of April in the year 1882, his place in American Jewry's hall of fame was secure. As Jewish leader and as American patriot he had toiled untiringly and unselfishly. He had spoken golden words of eternal truth on many an important occasion. In appearance every inch the leader, he had gone in and out among his people, a messenger of the Lord of Hosts. Four weeks after his demise, a service was held in the religious home he loved so well, the temple of the congregation, at which sincere tributes of appreciation were spoken by his life-long friend and co-worker, Isaac M. Wise, and other leaders in American Jewry, Rabbis Henry S. Jacobs of New York and Jacob Voorsanger, lately of San Francisco, as well as by two of Ohio's greatest citizens, General Jacob D. Cox and Judge J. B. Stallo. The eloquent words with which the latter closed his oration characterize finely the outlook of the lofty spirit whom he was eulogizing. "His longing was for the future, not for the past. Forward and upward was his motto. His Messiah was not a single man but reason and its fine effects. His promised country was not one narrow speck of earth, but the whole broad universe. His brethren were not only those to whose race he belonged; every one who furthered the aims of humanity was his brother and friend. It is in this

sense that we meet here, one great brotherhood, to mourn the loss of a dearly beloved brother. I can best close with the fervent hope that his spirit may continue in his people forever and aye. Then will be verified the words of Goethe in his Tasso that "the place where a great man has lived remains a fruitful seed for all generations."

One hundred years have passed since Max Lilienthal first saw the light of day. During that century the spirit of freedom has won great victories. Despite occasional relapses the progress achieved in the cause of liberty is very marked. Freedom was the breath of Lilienthal's nostrils. He was a true apostle of liberty. Aristocratic in thought and bearing, he was democratic in life and principle. America embodied for him the hope of humanity. The upholding of American principles was a passion with him. American Judaism, combining loyalty to the high teachings of Judaism with fealty to the basic institutions of American liberty and the high hopes for a united humanity, represented for him the flower of the endeavor of the ages. In inspired mood he at one time defined this ideal in words which glow with loyalty to a great past and hope for a glorious future.

"Resting with its roots in deep antiquity," so run his words, "it still branches forth like a sound, healthy oak tree. It tries to adapt itself to the advanced ideas of the age, to become reconciled with the results of science, and, without surrendering its special characteristics, to preach humanity instead of racial antipathy, reason instead of blind faith, the living spirit instead of the dead letter.

"It has inscribed on its banner the glorious words of the common Fatherhood of God and the common Brotherhood of Man and believes, *in hoc signo vinces*. With Catholic and Protestant, with Mohammedan and Buddhist, it hopes and waits for that kingdom of heaven on earth in which the redemption of the human family will become a blessed reality so that virtue and justice and unsectarian brotherly love may reign supreme, and evil and hatred may be numbered among the things of the past."

THE PRINCIPLES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS*

THE great changes wrought in the existence of the Jews by the gradual emancipation from civil and political disabilities in the lands of western Europe in what is known as the modern era, dating from the close of the eighteenth century, were accompanied by similar marked changes in the inner cultural and religious life. Political emancipation, industrial freedom and educational opportunities with the resultant enlarged outlook upon life were accompanied necessarily by a spirit of impatience with inherited religious viewpoints and practices. The right of the individual conscience asserted itself strongly and the clashes between authority as embodied in the accumulated traditions of the past and individualism as defining the freedom of the present, became sharp and constant. The authority of the religious code which the medieval ghetto Jew accepted unquestioningly was superseded in many quarters by a radical individualism which set all religious authority at naught. The body of authority was broken up. It was, however, not only the authority of the code or *Schulchan Arukh*, which was the bond of union among the Jews of medieval Europe. Besides this bond of a common religious authority, there was also the bond of a common suffer-

*Twenty-fifth Anniversary Address at meeting of Central Conference of American Rabbis, July 3, 1913, at Detroit, Mich.

ing in the same cause and the bond of a common hope, namely, the realization of the dream of the return to Palestine and the reestablishment of the Jewish state as the consummation of Israel's mission. This triple bond, a common religious authority, the code, a common lot of present suffering and disability and a common hope for the future, account sufficiently for the union of the Jewish communities, however widely separated. The emancipation of the modern era shattered this triple bond. The movement for religious reform which resulted from political and educational emancipation, and whose aim was to adjust the religious views and practices to the new outlook of the Jew freed from the ghetto and all that it implied, undermined the authority of the *Schulchan Arukh*. The newly acquired freedom which arrested medieval persecution and aroused the hope for the gradual disappearance of the Jewish *misère* weakened the second former bond of union, namely, the suffering in a common cause, and the surrender of the ancient hope of the return to Palestine and the substitution therefor of the universal belief in the coming of a Messianic Age for all humanity loosened the third bond which had united all Jews formerly. Where then, European Jewry, however widely scattered, had been practically one and united during the centuries of oppression; now that the Jews were gaining the rights of men and citizens, there seemed to be no authority which was respected, no bond which joined them to one another. Notably was this true as far as Jewish life as such was concerned. Ritual and practice, ceremonies and forms, customs and beliefs, concerning

which there had been no question, were challenged and disobserved. There was almost a condition of religious anarchy in the early decades of the nineteenth century. The religious leaders were sadly at variance with one another. They ran the gamut from the extremest orthodoxy of a Solomon Eger and a Solomon Abraham Tiktin, championing the authority of the *Schulchan Arukh* in its each and every command to the uncompromising radicalism of a Samuel Holdheim and a Mendel Hess, who had no appreciation whatsoever of the compelling power of the historic spirit. The people were sadly puzzled. Was there no way out of this disorganization which was so painfully apparent? The exigencies of the new life for a reinterpretation and reweighing of Jewish values in the light of the new conditions cried aloud for some satisfaction. The reconciling of inherited tradition with present needs demanded consideration. This was, of course, the case only in those communities that had been touched by the modern spirit, notably, Germany, France and England, but particularly Germany. Here the anarchic disorganization filled with alarm observant men, both in the rabbinical office and in the congregations. It was felt by such that some steps must be taken to stem this disorganization and to bring harmony out of this chaos. For this reason Abraham Geiger, while rabbi in Wiesbaden, issued a call in 1837 for a meeting of rabbis that they might confer together on the present state of Judaism in Germany, discuss questions of the hour and come to conclusions which might be accepted by the people as the deliberate judgment

of the religious leaders. This was the first attempt at a rabbinical conference in modern days. Little of note, beyond the mapping out of work to be done, was accomplished. But Geiger showed the way and the Wiesbaden Conference, though small and fruitless of practical results, was the lantern bearer that pointed the path to all the future attempts at bringing union and organization into the confused and distracted religious affairs of Jewry in the modern world.

When seven years later, in the beginning of the year 1844, Ludwig Philippson, who beyond all the celebrated Rabbis of that day had the gift of organization, issued a call in the columns of his newspaper, *Die Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, for a rabbinical conference, the hearty response to the call showed that Geiger's first attempt had borne fruit. The Rabbis who met at Brunswick in response to Philippson's call were clearly conscious of the situation they had to meet. When they declared that

> "The rabbinical conferences shall have as their purpose that the members shall take counsel together in order to determine by what means the preservation and development of Judaism and the enlivening of the religious consciousness can be accomplished,"

they stated the purpose of such gatherings finely. The rabbinical conferences were to arrogate to themselves no authority over the religious conscience of the individual; they claimed no synodical or ecclesiastical authority to loose or to bind: they were to be deliberative bodies where many men of many minds were to discuss the many disputed points of religious belief and practice from all possible angles and to at-

tempt to arrive at some conclusion, if not unanimous, at least reflecting the view of the majority; it was felt that such conclusions, although not authoritative in the sense that the conference had any power to compel the acceptance thereof by individuals and congregations, would yet be considered authoritative because they were the decisions arrived at by men of learning, of light and of leading; it was hoped that the conferences would secure the confidence of the congregations and would gradually assume the position of religious guides because of the character of the membership; although they would have no means of enforcing their decisions and pronouncements, yet these decisions and pronouncements would in time gain authority from the very nature of the case; or as one of the leading Rabbis put it:

> "The purpose of our gathering is to work for the preservation and development of our holy religion; all our deliberations are concerned herewith, and we pass resolutions as to how this is to be accomplished. Have we any synodical justification? No; we as little as the Rabbis of former times. What gave them their power was the confidence of the congregations, and this confidence was reposed in them because they were scholars and adepts in the law. The same holds with us."

On such a basis alone can the authority of a conference of Rabbis rest, whether now it was the conference at Brunswick in 1844, or this latest rabbinical convention in Detroit, meeting just seventy years thereafter. The special work, deliberations and resolutions of the famous German Conferences at Brunswick, Frankfort and Breslau of that fifth decade of the nineteenth century, I can not stop to discuss or

even mention. I refer to them by way of historical introduction to my theme, and also because there is a direct bond of connection between our Conference, whose silver anniversary we are now celebrating, and these early conferences on German soil. The very first resolution adopted by this Conference on the day of its organization in this city twenty-five years ago declared:

> "That the proceedings of all the modern rabbinical conferences from that held in Brunswick in 1844 and including all like assemblages held since, shall be taken as a basis for the work of this Conference in an endeavor to maintain in unbroken succession the formulated opinion of Jewish thought and life in each era."

There is then the direct bond of connection between our meeting here and now and that first assembly of Reform Rabbis. This Conference is the institution par excellence that represents the historic spirit of modern Judaism. The Brunswick Conference was an experiment, its descendant and successor, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, is an accomplished fact, and is the representative institution of the religious life and aspiration of liberal Judaism in this country. What the German Rabbis of that era of storm and stress visioned but failed to bring to pass, namely, a stable rabbinical conference that was to meet from year to year, their American descendants in the spirit have achieved with God's help and through the initiative of the masterful founder and the never-to-be-forgotten father of this Conference, the mighty builder of flourishing Jewish institutions, America's foremost Jewish organizing genius, Isaac M. Wise.

Our great teacher once told the present speaker,

with whom he was associated as colleague in the same city for over ten years, that he had attended as a visitor the second of the three famous German Rabbinical Conferences of the fifth decade of the nineteenth century, viz., that of Frankfort on the Main; he was not a member of the Conference, nor did he participate in the discussions; he, a young Bohemian rabbi, was there simply as an onlooker and an interested listener. Who can tell but that the ideas engendered in Isaac M. Wise's fruitful mind by the sight of a number of German Rabbis in council were directly responsible for his untiring and unabated efforts in the same direction almost from the time that he arrived in this country? Setting foot on these shores in July, 1846, he associated himself in October of that year with Dr. Max Lilienthal and two others in the formation of a *Beth Din*, the first recorded association of a number of Rabbis for united work in the cause of Judaism in this country. Although this *Beth Din* accomplished little, if anything, of lasting practical importance, still it stands in the history of American Judaism as the earliest attempt at a rabbinical association. And as such it is significant and has its place in a survey of such associations of American Rabbis.

The formation of a rabbinical organization was advocated constantly by Wise in spoken address and written word, and when shortly after his arrival in Cincinnati he established his newspaper, "The Israelite", in July, 1854, he soon began to agitate in its columns the idea of a rabbinical conference. So well did he succeed that within the short space of a

little more than a year such a conference, the first on America's soil, convened in the city of Cleveland, in the month of October, 1855. The resolutions adopted by that conference, instead of uniting all the Rabbis of the country, as was the fond hope of the men assembled, became a veritable apple of discord and divided the American Rabbinate into warring camps. A mere reference to these unfortunate years of bitter recrimination and animosity must suffice Far be it from me on this happy anniversary occasion to dwell even briefly upon the differences and dissonances, either past or present; ours be it to strengthen the spirit of union and harmony!

Fourteen years after the Cleveland Conference, with its regrettable result of dividing the reform Rabbis into an Eastern faction, composed of the leaders on the Atlantic seaboard, and a Western, of which Cincinnati represented the front and leading, the two factions met together in Philadelphia at the Conference that took place in that city in 1869. Here the differences seemed to be healed. Wise and Lilienthal, the great Western leaders, and Einhorn, Samuel Hirsch and Samuel Adler, the foremost Eastern Rabbis and a number of their colleagues from various parts of the country, gathered to discuss matters of vital religious concern. However, the union among the Rabbis which the Philadelphia Conference effected, was unfortunately not lasting. Within the next two years three rabbinical conferences were held, one at Cleveland, in July, 1870, a second at New York, in October of the same year, and a third at Cincinnati, in June, 1871. None of these Conferences

was attended by the noted Eastern leaders who were prominent in the deliberations of the Philadelphia Conference. Let the veil be drawn over the bitter differences and expressions of those years also. Let the dead past bury its dead.

Thirteen years were to elapse ere another rabbinical conference was to meet in this country, although in the interim two great institutions were founded as the results of Wise's unremitting campaign for union and organization: the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the first impetus to which was given at the rabbinical conference, held in Cincinnati, in 1871, had been organized in March, 1873, and the Hebrew Union College opened its doors in October, 1875. These two institutions gradually removed the differences between the Eastern and Western parties, so that when in 1885 a call for a meeting of Rabbis at Pittsburg was issued by the present revered Honorary President of our Conference Jewish ministers from cities extending from New York to St. Louis assembled there and deliberated in harmonious cooperation during three November days in that year. This Conference is known in history chiefly because of the platform of principles there adopted. The Rabbis who met at Pittsburg were of the Liberal wing, and the principles adopted reflected their point of view. This Conference had scarcely adjourned when the Conservative and Orthodox Rabbis assailed vehemently the declarations there made. This was to be expected. A result of the opposition aroused by the Pittsburg Conference was the founding of the Jewish Theological Seminary af New York. The

great difference, however, between the opposition engendered by the Pittsburg Conference and that aroused by former conferences was that reformers were arrayed against reformers in earlier instances, while the Pittsburg platform accentuated the differences between the reformers an the one hand and the orthodox on the other. Happily, here the reformers were not divided. When the Pittsburg Conference adjourned, it was with the understanding that the next meeting was to take place in Cincinnati the following June. This meeting, however, was never held.

Another interval of four years elapsed before Rabbis from all parts of the country met in council-although two sectional conferences had been or, ganized, one of Eastern Rabbis and one of Southern Rabbis. The passing years had brought mellower influences to bear. The Hebrew Union College was securing an ever more assured position. Isaac M. Wise held the undisputed place of rabbir ical leader-ship in the country. Conditions were now shaping themselves so as to make possible the realization of his third great plan of union; the congregations were united; the rabbinical college was successfully estab-lished; there only remained the rabbinical union to be consummated. In the spring of 1889 the great leader, who was approaching his seventieth birthday, said to the present writer, who had come to Cincinnati the preceding November, that he believed the time was now ripe for the establishment of a rabbinical conference. Plans were afoot for the fitting celebra-tion of his seventieth birthday. He felt that if that

event could be marked by the realization of his dream of a lifetime, it would be joyous indeed. He could now count upon his own boys, as he called the graduates of the College, to rally around him, as well as the many Rabbis who had stood loyally with him in past years. Even the opponents of former years had become gradually reconciled and the time seemed indeed propitious for a comprehensive organization of the Reform Rabbis of the country. He had, as just said, taken me, at that time a young man of twenty-six, into his confidence. We worked out together in Cincinnati the plan and came to Detroit prepared to call together the Rabbis who would be present at the convention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, which met in this city at this season twenty-five years ago.

On the ninth day of that month of July, in the year 1889, your fellow member whom you have honored by asking him to deliver this anniversary address, called together the meeting at which this Conference was organized by the following pronouncement:

> "We, the Rabbis, here assembled, do organize ourselves into a 'Central Conference of American Rabbis,' and appoint a committee of five to report a plan of organization."

This committee reported the following day, July 10. The plan of organization drawn up by them was adopted and permanent officers were elected. Isaac M. Wise, the founder of the Conference, was elected President, and held the office for the succeeding eleven years, until his great and blessed life closed its earthly chapter. The paragraph of that plan of organization quoted above, which declared that,

> "The proceedings of all modern rabbinical conferences from that held in Brunswick in 1844, and including all like assemblages held since, shall be taken as a basis for the work of this conference,"

shows clearly that the charter members intended this Conference to be the official expression of the modern Jewish spirit as the successor of all similar Jewish effort in the past. Our modern or Reform Judaism, as it is usually called, is only the latest expression of the Jewish spirit and the latest link in the chain of Jewish development. For this the Conference, as the organization uniting into one association well nigh all rabbis of liberal tendency stands. The Conference founds upon the spiritual endeavor of all the centuries of Jewish aspiration; it maintains the line of Jewish tradition, though it interprets Jewish traditions in the light of God's continuous revelation of Himself in the developing thought of the ages.

From the very beginning the Conference has been conscious of its purpose and significance as the organized expression of Jewish religious leadership in this country. It has not arrogated to itself any authority, ecclesiastical or synodical, but its members have discussed the many and varied questions of Jewish belief, thought and practice and have embodied in resolution and pronouncement after earnest deliberation the views of the majority on the points under discussion. This majority view, however, has never coerced the minority, nor even the individual, but it has stood and stands in each instance as the deliberate conclusion of the leaders of our faith in

council and has been thus accepted as the expression of the modern Jewish viewpoint. During its existence of a quarter of a century, the Conference has gradually taken its place as the representative religious organization of Progressive American Jewry; its annual conventions furnish the forum for the consideration of any and all important religious questions; its authority lies not in the application of police measures; it has no power to enforce its views by methods of excommunication or otherwise, nor would it if it could, but its power and authority are derived altogether from the representative character of its membership, from its symbolization of the union of our religious leadership and from the confidence which it has inspired throughout the land by its methods and achievements.

In the founder's first message to the Conference, which may be looked upon as the ripe fruit of his thought as to the purpose of such an organization, its possibilities and its ideals he expressed himself on this vital question of the authority of the Conference in these words:

> "It is by the solid union of its expounders only that Judaism can command the respect due to it among its votaries and its opponents. The imposing number and unanimity of an intellectual and moral organization impress the community with veneration and command a more profound respect even than the noblest deeds and most exalted thoughts of the few, antagonistic to each other. If Judaism is to be properly respected, its bearers and expounders must first be, and this can be gained only by solid union."[1]

[1] Yearbook I, 13.

And further along in this same message he expanded this thought by saying:

> "The united Rabbis have undoubtedly the right—also according to Talmudical teachings—to declare and decide, anyhow for our country, with its peculiar circumstances, unforeseen anywhere, which of our religious forms, institutions, observances, usages, customs, ordinances and prescriptions are still living factors in our religious, ethical and intellectual life, and which are so no longer and ought to be replaced by more adequate means to give expression to the spirit of Judaism and to reveal its character of universal religion. It is undoubtedly the duty and right of the united Rabbis to protect Judaism against stagnation and each individual Rabbi against the attacks frequently made upon every one who proposes any reform measure. Let the attack hereafter be made in the Conference and let the honor of the individual be preserved intact. All reforms ought to go into practice on the authority of the Conference, not only to protect the individual Rabbi, but to protect Judaism against presumptuous innovations and the precipitation of rash and inconsiderate men. The Conference is the lawful authority in all matters of form."[2]

And the closing paragraph of this initial presidential address sums up the situation thus clearly and comprehensively:

> "Whatever the individual could not or should not do, and yet ought to be done in support of Israel's mission or in advancement of American Judaism, the Conference could and should do. The collective learning and piety is a power for good by sincere cooperation. If many support one, man is a power. If one sustains many, he becomes the wisdom and energy of many. If the spirit of Judaism is to be developed to universal religion and provided with the forms and means to be accessible to the common intelligence —and this is our mission and our duty—we must have the

[2] Ibid., page 19.

united rabbinate, the annual Conference, the earnest and steady work of all our intellectual forces united in one power. With this Conference we enter upon the new phase of American Judaism as the free messenger of God to a free people, a kingdom of priests to anoint a holy nation. Let the work be equal to the ideal and the success as rich as the Lord's promise to all his anointed messengers: 'The Lord said unto me, thou art my son, I have this day begotten thee' ".[3]

In his last message but one to the Conference, Dr. Wise again addressed himself to this subject, and I quote his words because they were written after the Conference had existed nine years, a period longer than any similar institution in the history of modern Judaism, and thus are significant not merely as a forecast, which the opening message was, but as a historical retrospect of the path the Conference had trodden and a final word from his lips as to the character of our organization, for he never expressed himself on the subject again at our gatherings, it being granted him to attend only one other after the meeting at which these words were spoken. In this message, read before the Atlantic City Convention, in 1898, he said:

"This body started into existence with a bold, uncompromising and frankly outspoken principle and without wavering at any time, without holding out any bait or offering any compromise to the undecided outsider, steadfastly adhered to it. 'Ours is the purely historical principle of Judaism, with its progressive and reforming spirit,' was the announcement first and last, 'we are the successor of all rabbinical conferences and synods of the nineteenth century, or perhaps of the post-Mendelssohnian age, the latest link of that chain; we only continue the work in harmony with

[3] Ibid., page 21.

the spirit of this age and this country, as the preservation and promulgation of our sacred inheritance demand it to the best of our knowledge and judgment. We want no associates that have not arrived at this standpoint; whoever is not for us, can not be with us.' Such was the original proclamation, and to it did you cling faithfully and immutably. 'No ogling with the orthodoxy of any denomination, also no outcry of heresy against men and scholars of other convictions,' was the starting idea, and remained the efficient cause of all your decisions to this day, as is abundantly evident from all publications of this Conference. This appreciation of the spirit of history and of this age and this country, this frank and free announcement of it, and this consistency in the exceptional adherence to it, commanded the respect of the community, inspired confidence, and established the body's authority, and what is perhaps more important, it preserved this body intact, steadily augmented its numbers and produced for it the attachment and loyalty which is the pride of our Conference. Another cause of the longevity of this Conference is that it never assumed any but an advisory authority. No inquisitory, no hierarchical, no commandatory authority was ever claimed or exercised by this body. It never commanded, hence it was never disobeyed; it advised its members and their congregations and many did listen to it."[4]

I have quoted the founder's views on the subject in hand at some length because I feel this to be not only a duty of piety, but also because I believe that the wise words of him who was a septuagenarian when the Conference was founded and within a year of being an octogenarian when the sentences last adduced were spoken would express still today with very slight alteration the viewpoint of most of the members of the Conference. Many other significant and precious

[4] Yearbook VIII, 11 and 12.

words have been uttered by Presidents and members on this and other subjects that have been discussed at the sessions of the Conference, but in the nature of the case, from now on I can give only the expressions of the Conference as a body, and not of any individual members, worthy as these are in many instances, of being repeated. Dr. Wise's relation to the Conference is unique; no other individual has, or in any likelihood ever shall, acquire the position he held in our body. Let me then in support of the view of the founder indicate the views of the Conference as a body on this important introductory matter of authority.

A resolution adopted at one of the early sessions of the organization may be taken as the official statement of its standpoint as to its authority. In 1892, the Committee on President's Message reported the following resolution, which was adopted:

> "The Committee recommends the endorsement of the standpoint set forth in the message that the Conference, though not an authoritative religious body, still claims for itself the right to formulate such principles as represent the convictions of progressive congregations and to suggest such constructive measures as will be helpful to those who share their views."[5]

At three other conventions the Committee on President's Message variously constituted, quoted sentences from these messages as expressive of the spirit of the Conference and so recommended in the report which was endorsed by the body. The first of these statements of the standpoint and purpose of the Conference is thus given:

[5] Yearbook III, 14.

"In accord with the spirit of the message, we desire to endorse the President's conception of the function of our Conference in American Judaism, to wit: 'That it ever remain and continue to be a positive agency for the strengthening of the Jewish spirit, a constructive power that shall successfully grapple with the many perplexing problems that are constantly confronting us, a true, representative, religious organization of American Jewry; that it build firmly on the past foundations and be ever mindful of the demand of the present; that it work hand in hand with the many splendid associations in our variegated Jewish activity, with thought ever directed to the realization of the prophetic program of a *b'rith 'am 'or goyim*, to the end that Judaism may in all truth become the light of the world through the devoted service of the covenant people, Israel, God's servant.' "[6]

The second statement reads:

"The twentieth annual convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis will be ever memorable in the annals of this organization. The celebration of the Einhorn centenary indicates the essential unity which has been brought about among the various elements of Reform Judaism in America. Old misunderstandings have been cleared away and a spirit of cooperation has been engendered, which is rich in promise for the future. The founder of our Conference, that great protagonist of American Judaism, is singularly justified of his hopes. The splendid emphasis laid upon the ideal of Reform Judaism in the President's message that 'the Conference continues the line of Jewish tradition, but it evaluates traditions according to their power to express the message of religion to living men' indicates clearly the religious attitude of our Conference The Central Conference of American Rabbis endorses this platform of progress and pledges itself through its members to carry out the ideals of Reform Judaism."[7]

[6] Yearbook XVIII, 92.
[7] Yearbook XIX, 154-5.

And the third resolution avers:

> "We agree that reform was inevitable. And we, too, have 'an abiding conviction that the Reform movement, the product of inevitable historic forces, is a legitimate growth on the parent stem, and is bound to extend to even larger numbers as modern civilization, at its best, expands its realms'. It is a matter of particular gratification to note the spread of the liberal spirit in Europe, and we again send our greetings to the workers in London, Berlin, Paris, Melbourne, Budapest, and St. Petersburg, and wish them abundant success in the effective and healthy adaptation of the principles and ideals of Reform Judaism to their respective needs."[8]

Although unswerving in its allegiance to the principle of progress and development in Judaism the Conference has not been narrow in its sympathies nor unmindful of its connection with the whole house of Israel. It has manifested its catholicity on many and all occasions. It has celebrated by the reading of scholarly papers the centenaries, as was to be expected, not only of such protagonists of Reform as Samuel Holdheim, David Einhorn, Samuel Adler, Abraham Geiger, Leopold Stein, and Ludwig Philippson, but also of so uncompromising a champion of orthodoxy as Samuel Raphael Hirsch; at its session in the city of New York, in 1909, it sent representatives to the funeral of Joseph Mayer Asher, that fine type of the orthodox Rabbi, greatly admitted not only by his own sympathizers, but also by us who differed with him altogether in principle and practice; aye, not only this, but a brief service was held during the session of the Conference in his memory.

[8] Yearbook XX, 139.

Further, nothing that is of interest to Jewry at large but finds an echo in the deliberations of our body. The Conference by its willingness to co-operate with other organizations has vindicated time and again its claim to be the central representative organization of the Jewish ministry in the United States. At a very recent meeting it was resolved that

> "We express our readiness to cooperate with all parties in Judaism in every effort making for the moral, cultural and industrial efficiency of the Jews all over the world",[9]

and the recommendation was adopted to appoint a committee on cooperation with other Jewish religious organizations for the advancement of Judaism in accordance with the President's suggestion that

> "We should take the initiative and lend cooperation toward the upbuilding of any form of Judaism that makes for religious deepening and for ethical insight and influence."[10]

After this general purview of the character and standpoint of the Conference, it becomes necessary to point out the most important resolutions and achievements of the organization during the quarter century of its blessed activity. This record naturally falls under two heads, the theoretical and the practical; the theoretical indicates the attitude of the Conference in matters of religious belief and opinion as well as pronouncements on larger issues affecting Jewish and general matters; the practical shows forth the achievements of the Conference in the matter of publications, organization and the like.

[9] Yearbook XXII, 230.

[10] Ibid., page 228.

The Conference has addressed itself to the consideration of the moot points of Jewish belief and practice, and has met the issues in a manner befitting their importance and its dignity. It will be understood that it is possible to pass in review only the most important of the declarations of the Conference The only feasible manner of conducting this inquiry is to proceed in the chronological order in which the various actions were taken, even though this involves the sacrifice of logical sequence as far as subject matter is concerned.

At the convention of the year 1892 the question of the requirements for the admission of male proselytes into Judaism was debated at great length. The resolution as finally adopted at this convention reads as follows:

> "Resolved, That the Central Conference of American Rabbis, assembled this day in this city of New York, considers it lawful and proper for any officiating Rabbi, assisted by no less than two associates, and in the name and with the consent of his congregation, to accept into the sacred covenant of Israel and declare fully affiliated to the congregation לכל דבר שבקדושה any honorable and intelligent person, who desires such affiliation, without any initiatory rite, ceremony or observance whatever; provided, such person be sufficiently acquainted with the faith, doctrine and religious usages of Israel; that nothing derogatory to such person's moral and mental character is suspected; that it is his or her free will and choice to embrace the cause of Judaism, and that he or she declare verbally and in a document signed and sealed before such officiating Rabbi and his associates his or her intention and firm resolve:
>
> 1. To worship the One, Sole and Eternal God, and none besides Him.

2. To be conscientiously governed in his or her doings and omissions in life by God's laws, ordained for the child and image of the Maker and Father of all, the sanctified son or daughter of the divine covenant.

3. To adhere in life and death, actively and faithfully to the sacred cause and mission of Israel, as marked out in Holy Writ.

Be it furthermore

Resolved, That a committee of three be appointed to report to this Conference formulas of the two documents, viz., one to be signed by the proselyte and witnesses, to remain in the hands of the officiating Rabbi, and another to be signed by the officiating Rabbi and his associates, to be delivered to the proselyte.

All of which is respectfully submitted to this honorable body by your Committee.

Isaac M. Wise, Chairman."[11]

The Conference here made the important declaration that the rite of circumcision may be dispensed with in the reception of the male proselyte into Judaism.

At this same convention what was called the burning question of cremation was discussed. Does Judaism countenance the rite of cremation, and shall the Rabbi as the representative of Judaism officiate at funerals in such instances? In answer to such and similar questions it was

"Resolved, That in case we should be invited to officiate as ministers of religion at the cremation of a departed co-religionist, we ought not to refuse on the plea that cremation is anti-Jewish or irreligious."[12]

One of the great achievements of Reform Judaism is the religious emancipation of woman. Woman as

[11] Yearbook III, 36.

[12] Ibid., page 41.

wife and mother has always held a very high place in Jewish esteem, but owing to the oriental surroundings in which Judaism was born, she had not part in public religious functions. Reform Judaism changed all this. Gradually woman secured the same religious consideration and standing as man. The introduction of the family pew, the departure from the custom of not beginning service until ten adult males were present and similar reforms indicate the changes that the new valuation of woman's place has brought. These changes have now reached the point that in a number of congregations woman is admitted to full membership on equal terms with man. As far as I know, the first public demand for this recognition of woman in Jewish congregations was voiced in a resolution adopted at the convention of that same year, 1892, when the following preamble and resolution were adopted:

> "Whereas, We have progressed beyond the idea of the secondary position of women in Jewish congregations, we recognize the importance of their hearty cooperation and active participation in congregational life. Therefore, be it
>
> Resolved, That the Executive Board have prepared for the next annual convention a paper tracing the development of the recognition of woman in Jewish congregations, and expounding a conclusion that woman be eligible to full membership with all privileges of voting and holding office in our congregations."[13]

In the year 1896, the pamphlet of Theodore Herzl entitled "The Jewish State" was issued. This pamphlet was the inspiration of the movement known

[13] Ibid., page 40.

as Zionism, which has called forth enthusiastic adherence on the one hand and decided opposition on the other. In the very early days of this movement the Conference took a decided stand in reference to it.

Dr. Isaac M. Wise in his presidential message read at the meeting held at Montreal in the year following the appearance of Herzl's pamphlet and the birth of the Zionist movement took strong issue with this political interpretation of Israel's future and urged that the Conference give voice to a pronouncement upon the subject in accordance with the principles that it represented. Accordingly the following utterance on the subject was adopted:

> "Resolved, That we totally disapprove of any attempt for the establishment of a Jewish state. Such attempts show a misunderstanding of Israel's mission, which from the narrow political and national field has been expanded to the promotion among the whole human race of the broad and universalistic religion first proclaimed by the Jewish prophets. Such attempts do not benefit, but infinitely harm our Jewish brethren where they are still persecuted, by confirming the assertion of their enemies that the Jews are foreigners in the countries in which they are at home, and of which they are everywhere the most loyal and patriotic citizens.
>
> We reaffirm that the object of Judaism is not political nor national, but spiritual, and addresses itself to the continuous growth of peace, justice and love in the human race, to a messianic time when all men will recognize that they form 'one great brotherhood' for the establishment of God's kingdom on earth."[14]

[14] Yearbook VII, XLI.

Nine years later an affirmation similar in spirit was made when the members present at the Indianapolis Convention declared:

> "We herewith reaffirm that religion is the tie which unites the Jews, the Synagog is the basic institution of Judaism and the congregation its unit of representation."[15]

And in terms equally strong the standpoint of the Conference in this matter was reaffirmed two years ago, when at Baltimore the statement in the report of the Committee on Church and State was endorsed to the following effect:

> "Inasmuch as we are unqualifiedly committed to the total separation of Church and State, we discountenance any movement in Jewish communities on other than the religious basis which would violate this principle and tend to create the impression that the Jews are an *imperium in imperio*."[16]

A favorite theme some years ago in a number of Jewish pulpits was the personality and the teaching of the founder of Christianity; it became quite the fashion in some quarters to lecture on this subject; one critic of this tendency denounced what he termed this coquetting with Christianity; in truth, in some instances it appeared that the Rabbi in this matter was more royalist than the king. A communication was addressed to the Conference by a gentleman much interested in this subject; he requested the opinion of the Conference as to whether Jesus of Nazareth shall be taught in the Jewish religious school. This communication was referred to a committee at the

[15] Yearbook XVI, 183.
[16] Yearbook XXII, 108.

Philadelphia Convention in 1901 for consideration and report; the Committee's report, which was adopted as the expression of the opinion of the Conference, reads thus:

> "The position of Judaism in respect to the founder of Christianity is altogether negative, namely, as denying his divinity. Though the pivot on which Christianity revolves, Jesus of Nazareth has no place in Jewish theology. The conception of his historical position and of his significance in the development of religion is a matter of individual view and conviction, as is also the pointing out and appreciation of the Jewish nature of many of the beautiful moral teachings attributed to Jesus, but these can not form part of nor be incorporated in any official statement or declaration of Jewish belief."[17]

At the New Orleans Convention following this meeting held at Philadelphia, a commission was appointed to study the Sabbath question, notably as to the matter of Sabbath observance and to report its findings. This commission, headed by our lamented colleague of blessed memory, Rabbi Jacob Voorsanger, reported the following year at the second convention, held in the city of Detroit. The crux of the lengthy and at times heated discussion was the matter of Sunday services. In the resolution which was finally adopted this question was not included except by inference. The resolution reads:

> "The Conference declares itself in favor of maintaining the historical Sabbath as a fundamental institution of Judaism and of exerting every effort to enforce its observance."[18]

[17] Yearbook XI, 86.
[18] Yearbook XIII, 77.

However, at the following convention, held in Louisville in 1904, the President referred to the subject at length in his message, calling attention to economic and business conditions, which make the observance of the historical Sabbath practically impossible for thousands and urging the need of a service on the civil day of rest for the benefit of such as can not attend on the historical Sabbath. In response to this presentation of the matter the Conference placed the seal of its approval upon the resolution adopted by the Pittsburg Rabbinical Conference by concurring in the recommendation of the Committee on President's Message, which reported on the subject in this wise:

> "We recommend the principle expressed in the resolution adopted in the Pittsburgh Conference November, 1885, presenting it in the following form:
>
> Whereas, We recognize the importance of maintaining the historical Sabbath as a bond with our great past and a symbol of the unity of Israel the world over; and,
>
> Whereas, On the other hand, it can not be denied that there is a very large number of Jews who, owing to economic and industrial conditions, are not able to attend services on our sacred day of rest; be it
>
> Resolved, That in the judgment of this Conference there is nothing in the spirit of Judaism to prevent the holding of divine service on Sunday or any other weekday wherever the necessity of such services is felt."[19]

Another question of far-reaching consequence is that of mixed marriages. What attitude shall the Rabbi take when requested to officiate at such marriages? As is the custom in the consideration of all questions of grave import by the Conference,

[19] Yearbook XIV, 119.

the subject is presented from the historical and theological standpoint in exhaustive papers. This was the procedure also in this matter. Both at the Frankfort Convention of 1908 and the New York Convention of 1909, the subject of mixed marriages was presented in papers treating the theme from various points of view. As the outcome of the discussion of such papers on mixed marriages the Conference expressed its attitude on the subject under discussion thus:

> "The Central Conference of American Rabbis declares that mixed marriages are contrary to the tradition of the Jewish religion and should therefore be discouraged by the American Rabbinate."

The last pronouncement of the Conference to which I desire to call attention in this portion of this address is the judgment expressed on the subject of Judaism and Christian Science. Throughout this country there are Jews who are attracted by Christian Science, and who declare not only that there is nothing in Christian Science that is incompatible with Judaism, but that on the contrary they are better Jews because of their attachment to Christian Science.

This strange error was punctured by the resolution adopted by the leaders of Jewish thought assembled at Baltimore in 1912, when they declared as their deliberate judgment that

> "Whereas, Some of our coreligionists delude themselves into the belief that they can give formal adherence to the religious denomination calling itself Christian Science, without violating their allegiance to those beliefs, principles and ideals which express the spirit of Judaism in all ages,

> Be it Resolved by the Members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, That they are strengthened in their previous conviction that Christian Science in its tenets and beliefs is essentially different from and in fundamental contradiction with Judaism, and that it is impossible for a Jew to accept Christian Science without thereby denying Judaism."[20]

Although primarily concerned with questions of specific Jewish concern, the Conference as a national religious organization has addressed itself through these twenty-five years to many questions of the general religious and ethical life in the United States and the civilized world at large. Thus it has expressed its sympathy with the movement for international peace and arbitration;[21] has endorsed the movement for securing national marriage and divorce legislation;[22] has denounced child labor and commended the work

> "of all movements in state and federal legislation that endeavor to abolish child labor, as well as with all movements that make for the proper development of child life through education and recreation";[23]

has noted with gratification the efforts to suppress the white slave traffic through

> "the enactments of more rigorous legislation by twenty-nine States in the Union and the general cooperation of press, pulpit and other public agencies resulting in the diffusion of information and the exercise of powerful moral influence to overcome this evil";[24]

[20] Yearbook XXII, 229.
[21] Yearbook XXI, 114.
[22] Yearbook XVI, 192; XXII, 229.
[23] Yearbook XVIII, 94.
[24] Yearbook XXI, 118.

has declared itself on the widely discussed theme of the connection between wages and morals to the effect that

> "the connection between wages and morals is not direct in the sense that each individual who does not receive an adequate wage necessarily falls into immorality, but indirect, in the sense that the higher wage enables the individual to live under such environments that naturally make for general well being and better moral standards";[25]

and finally an instance should be cited when in a matter of general concern the Conference refused to take action, namely, when on the subject of woman suffrage the declaration was made that

> "this is a matter for the individual Rabbi, and it is inadvisable for the Conference as a body to take action."[26]

We must now turn to the consideration of the practical achievements of the Conference through which it has become a great unifying force in American Judaism and has frequently focussed upon tself the attention of Jewish observers abroad. Let me speak first of the publications of the Conference. As its premier achievement along this line must be mentioned the preparation and publication of the Union Prayer Book. One of the signs of the disorganized individualism that marked the Reform movement in its early days was the multiplication of prayer books. This accentuated the lack of harmony. The Conference through issuing the Union Prayer Book has become the agent of harmony among our Reform congregations. With but few exceptions the Reform

[25] Yearbook XXIII, 26.

[26] Ibid., page 133.

congregations throughout the land are using this prayer book. From the time that this prayer book, as prepared by the Ritual Committee, was adopted by the convention at Atlantic City twenty years ago, it has been introduced into three hundred and two congregations and twenty-three institutions and has thus become in all truth the authorized prayer book of our liberal movement in this country. The Union Hymnal is another achievement along this line of constructive work. First adopted in 1896, this work, thoroughly amended and revised, was approved by the Conference at its last year's session, and when this revised edition will appear from the press it will receive without doubt as hearty a welcome from our congregations as did the Union Prayer Book. The Union Hagadah, for use at the home service on the eve of Passover, has found wide favor, and the manual for domestic devotion containing prayers for all private occasions has met a great need. The many volumes of sermons for the holidays have made possible the holding of services in many small communities where, although Jews have no regularly constituted congregation, they desire to come together for worship on the high holy days.

The issuing of tracts on subjects of vital interest is one of the fine activities of the Conference. Mention must also be made of the many papers, some of great value, which have been read at the sessions of the Conference, published in the year-books and appearing frequently in separate form as reprints. The twenty-three volumes of the Yearbook are the literary monument of the strivings and activities of the Conference.

Besides issuing its own publications, the Conference throughout its existence has granted subventions to assist authors here and abroad in the publication of their works. The copies of such works which the Conference has received in recognition of this aid have been given usually to our rabbinical colleges, the educational institutions with which in the nature of the case the Conference feels in closest touch.

The Conference works largely through Standing Committees; many of these Committees have accomplished much and fine work, notably the Committee on Summer Services, which has been instrumental in having services conducted in summer resorts, such services having been held at nineteen of these resorts during the summer of 1912; the Committee on Religious Education and Sabbath School Exhibit, which arranges for the discussion of the important questions of the religious education of our children; the Committee on the Synagog and Industrial Relations, which reports on the relation of Judaism to the labor problems of the day; the Committee on Defectives, Dependents and Delinquents, which aims to bring religious influences to bear on these unfortunates of our community; the Committee on Religious Work in Universities, which addresses itself to the vital problem of arousing the Jewish students in our Universities throughout the land to an interest in their faith; the Committee on Responsa, to which are referred important questions of Jewish belief and practice as they arise in various communities; the Committee on Contemporaneous History, which presents each year an exhaustive report on important

events that have taken place in Jewry here and abroad throughout the year; and finally the Committee on Church and State, which, representing as it does, the important principle of the complete separation of Church and State, keeps itself informed of the attempted infractions of this principle anywhere throughout the country. This Committee prepared a number of years ago a pamphlet on the subject, "Why the Bible Should Not Be Read in the Public Schools," which was published by the Conference, and has been of great assistance in many communities where this question has been an issue.

Being a national organization, the Conference has cooperated and is now cooperating with other Jewish national organizations in the pursuit of common aims. Here must be mentioned first the cooperation with the Jewish Publication Society of America in preparing the new translation of the Bible into English. This great task, entered upon in 1907 by these two organizations, representing the two wings of Jewish thought, was under God's providence brought to a successful conclusion during the past year, and the new translation of the Bible will appear, as is now likely, within the next twelvemonth.

The Conference cooperates largely with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, notably through its Department of Synagog and School Extension. This cooperation is constant, and is notable in the work of a Joint Editorial Board for the publication of text books for our religious schools, and in the proposed task of the Joint Commission, named very recently, for the raising of the fund for the support

of superannuated ministers. For these worthy men who have grown old in the service, the Conference has made provision from the very beginning of its organization. A portion of its income from all sources goes into this Relief Fund. A number of estimable colleagues have been assisted; it is fine to think that this noble work will now assume a larger scope through the cooperation with our great national congregational organization. The Conference has also a Standing Committee on Cooperation with National Organizations to meet whatever situations may arise, which require united action on the part of the organized associations of American Jewry. The Conference represents Judaism as a spiritual force, and in all matters affecting the welfare and the status of the Jews differentiated as they are from their fellow citizens by their faith, it is certainly meet and proper that this organization should have a voice. Although the Conference has not always been given in past years the consideration due its representative character by other organizations claiming to speak for the Jews, it is to be hoped that in the future whenever critical situations arise requiring spokesmen for Judaism and Jewry at Washington and elsewhere, the spiritual leadership whereof our Conference is the national representative will be called into cooperation. In interests affecting all Jewry, there should be, nay, there may be no overlapping, no working at cross purposes, no desire for the personal glorification or aggrandizement of any special organization; there is glory enough to go around if glory is desired; only let there be true and hearty cooperaion in all common

causes. The Conference, by having appointed the Committee on Cooperation, has declared its position in this matter; may its action be met in a similar spirit by other organizations of national character for the result of such efficient and hearty cooperation can not but be beneficial in every way and can not but make for that higher unity which despite all the minor differences which divide Jews is real and fundamental. This unity the Conference is ever eager to emphasize, as has been amply shown time and again, and as is so clearly evident from the fact that among its Standing Committees it has placed this Committee on Cooperation with National Organizations.

I have passed in review what appear to me the leading principles and the striking achievements of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. During these twenty-five years of its existence the Conference has been a distinct religious force in Jewish life. It presents a unique phenomenon. Never in the history of Judaism has there been anything quite like it, a rabbinical organization having a continuous existence of this length. The Conference has grown constantly. Numerically, it is the largest rabbinical organization in the world. It is truly national in scope and international in sympathy. It combines within its membership the rabbis of the East and the West, the North and the South of our country. Through it the sectional differences of a former generation have been healed; it has united in the bond of fellowship with few exceptions all the rabbis of liberal tendencies and has thus become in all truth the great national

rabbinical organization of the progressive school of our faith. But though the association of the spiritual guides of Reform Judaism, the Conference has through out its career been so broad in its sympathies that all matters of import to Judaism at large have received its consideration. No movement of worldwide importance or international significance as affecting Jewy but has engaged its attention. And further, as has abundantly appeared from the review of its past, nothing human has been foreign to its deliberations. The ethical spirit, which is the prophetic spirit, is the mainspring of its activities. It has finely sustained the highest traditions of Jewish idealism and universalism, founding upon all the noble endeavor of our great worthies, the rabbis and sages that make the Jewish name glorious and contributing its share towards preserving and developing the eternal truths which are the very seal of God.

The Conference is now entering upon the semi-centennial of its corporate life. Institutions endure, individuals pass. Many of the charter members have been called from this earth, but this great institution which they assisted the illustrious founder in calling into being, lives, and unless all signs fail, will grow ever stronger and sturdier as the years come and go. The conference has had this fine growth because it combines the two great principles of Conservatism and Liberalism. It is Conservative in that it continues the traditions of our Reform Judaism, for paradoxical as it may sound, Reform Judaism has its traditions; we can now speak of Historical Reform, and the Conference is the representative of the spirit

of Historical Reform; the spirit of historical Reform senses the religious needs of the Jewish community in the modern environment and avoids the erraticisms of sensationalism and the fads and fancies of the passing day. It is liberal in that the dead hand of the past has never been permitted to rest upon it, but the living voice of the present has always been given heed to. It has aimed to conserve the best in our Jewish traditions; it has sought to interpret these traditions in the light of growing thought and thus to meet the religious problems of the present generation. Those of us who were present at the birth of the Conference, and who, under God's providence, have been spared to participate in the joy of this anniversary hour, and those others who have become affiliated with the Conference during this quarter century unite tonight in a prayer of thankfulness to our God for all that we through our Conference have been privileged to achieve in the furtherance of the tasks committed to our care.

We are united with all the past of high endeavor; what the Rabbis of former generations were for their time and place, we are for our time and place, this twentieth century, these United States. Some men of great gifts in the past have left their individual impress upon the developing course of Judaism, undoubtedly some men of marked powers in the present will leave their individual mark upon the generation now living, but, whether great or small, whether of wide renown or limited, all of us, through this our Conference, which unites us in brotherly bonds, are making our united influence felt and are serving

coming generations. True, then, let us be to the bond that unites us, service to our faith and humanity through our Conference. The record of the past twenty-five years is secure. Upon the foundation of that past we shall continue to build. In this anniversary hour, filled with sacred memories as it is, when the transfigured forms of those whom we loved and who toiled with us fill our vision, let us, my dear colleagues and brethren, consecrate ourselves anew to the high cause to which we have devoted our lives, so that, whatever may betide, we, as members of this Conference, conscious of our responsibilities and grateful for our opportunities, may be zealous for the truth, and as real messengers of God stand before the people, working here together in our great common cause. So shall we individually and unitedly contribute our share, be it much or be it little, to the endeavor of the ages and assist towards the fulfillment of the prophetic hope for the coming of the day when the knowledge of God shall fill the earth as the waters cover the seas.

LIKE PRIEST, LIKE PEOPLE*

WHEN my fellow-members of the executive committee did me the honor of requesting me to deliver the conference sermon this year, I could not but devote thought to what such a sermon should be and what manner of subject it should treat. For I take it that there should be something distinctive in a deliverance of this kind, just as there is in a baccalaureate sermon, a dedication sermon, or any sermon for a special occasion. To preach a sermon along similar lines as on Sabbath or holiday before the average congregation would be a work of supererogation before this body and in this place. I am fully conscious of the difficulty of the task of preaching to preachers; aware of my limitations as I am, and awake to the seriousness of the duty I have assumed, I make bold at the outset to request you to receive what I may have to say in the same brotherly spirit in which the words are spoken; for though in places I may appear censorious, I speak as I do only because I feel that there is a time to speak as well as a time to keep silence, and that there are certain things in our relation as rabbis to our congregations and to Judaism at large which are not as they should be and which should receive full, earnest and careful consideration at our hands.

I believe that no one will deny that the effect of the pulpit upon the pew is for good or ill according to

*Conference Sermon at meeting of Central Conference of American Rabbis, at Louisville, Ky., June 26, 1904.

the point of view from which the preacher regards his work. To express just what I want to say, I shall take the liberty of transposing the prophetical phrase כעם ככהן (Hosea IV. 9), so as to make it read ככהן כעם, "like priest, like people." This will serve as the text whereon I shall base what remarks I have to make; like priest, like people, yes; are we sufficiently conscious of this? Do we all keep before us as constantly as we should the tremendous influence of our individual attitude as preachers upon the religious outlook of the people? Are we all as alive as we should be to the fact that with us it lies in great part to make the cause for which we stand respected in the eyes of men or the object of unconcern and indifference? Is the purpose with us in all our waking hours, as it surely ought to be, to place the truth above thought of self, to scorn the arrogant dictations of such "whose armorial bearing is the almighty dollar," even though it jeopardize our popularity, to be the sentinels on the watch-towers of Zion, prophets with head in air, whose voices are trumpet-calls pointing out fault and shortcoming, rather than time-serving politicians in the pulpit, with ear to the ground listening to the direction in which the popular currents are blowing? We stand as individuals in our pulpits; as individuals our influence is uplifting, indifferent or debasing, as the case may be, as we determine. The prophet of old bewailed the time when Israel was as a flock without shepherds, worthy leaders to stand at the head of the community; truly, אלמן ישראל, Israel is widowed—yea, worse than widowed—if those who stand in the leader's place make light of their mission and the

Zedekiahs ben Chanaanah usurp the place of the Micaiahs ben Imlah; this let us never forget, ככהן כעם, like priest, like people; the man stamps his individuality upon his work; notably in this age of uncertain, shifting religious conditions, he who stands as a tower of strength will be indeed the refuge for struggling souls whose grasp upon the realities of time and eternity has been loosened owing to the disintegrating influences everywhere at work.

If we would add a stone to the edifice that Israel's leaders have been constructing throughout the ages, we will succeed in doing so only if we are fully possessed of the faith that we *can*, that with us advances, stands still, or retrogrades, the work. It will not do for us to constantly complain of the indifference of the people and the irreligion of the age. It is true the people are indifferent; it is true the age is not so deeply concerned with purely religious matters as former ages have been. There is scarcely one of us, I take it, who has not in moments of despair cried out in bitterness of soul against the indifference, irreligion and materialism of the people. Here, there and everywhere jeremiads are uttered in the pulpit so bitter, so despairing, so depressing, that one wonders whether there is any hope at all for the future if these dark pictures reflect the true state of affairs. Just as it has grown customary for laymen to blame the rabbis for all the ills in the Jewish body religious, so are we given in many instances to throwing all the responsibility for the light esteem in which religion and the pulpit are held upon the laity, in accordance with the old maxim, כל מקום שיש חילול השם אין הולקין כבוד לרב "wherever the spirit of irreligion is rampant,

proper respect is not shown to the rabbi" (Ber. 19b).

In all likelihood the truth of the matter lies somewhere between these extremes. The irreligion of the age is a convenient phrase; we can readily dismiss all responsibility by placing upon this scapegoat all the sins of the house of Israel and all our own shortcomings. But this will not satisfy earnest men, and as such we are here assembled.

Let me take up first that aspect of this question which can not but concern us as rabbis more closely than any other. I refer to the notorious fact that the pulpit does not attract the pick of our young men as do the other professions. Where a hundred enter the legal, medical, engineering and academic professions, one gives himself to the pulpit. Wherein lies the cause for this? Is it due purely to the irreligion of the age? or is it due in part to the pulpit itself? Is the pulpit recreant to its charge, do the men who occupy the pulpit fail to invest it with that dignity and worth as would make it seem the finest post for high-minded men to occupy? What is the reason for the change which has come upon Jewish thought in this matter? Time was when a Jewish parent considered it the greatest blessing if his son became a rabbi in Israel and when the Jewish Croesus regarded it the highest honor to ally himself by the marriage of his daughter with a noted rabbinical family. That period is certainly past. Consider, too, the evidence from the inside. Within the past few years four young rabbis occupying honorable positions have stepped out of the ministry. It is not betraying confidence to state that a number of candidates for the ministry have come to me and

stated the doubts and perplexities that beset them, and their purpose to enter some other field of endeavor. It is not more than two months since an open letter was published by a rabbi standing in the very forefront in answer to an inquiry of a young man desirous of entering the ministry, in which the questioner was solemnly warned not to do so, and with all the force of expression for which the writer is noted he set forth at great length the reasons why the pulpit today is unattractive to young men of parts. Where lies the reason for this consensus of opinion without and within? Jewish parents regard the pulpit with disfavor as a life-work for their sons; Jewish ministers leave the profession, or advise others not to enter it. Of course it will be said that where one rabbi deserts the pulpit a score remain faithful, where one rabbi advises a candidate not to enter the profession a score may advise differently. But straws show which way the wind blows, and these are very significant straws. Why then, I ask again, this veiled if not open disfavor evinced toward the pulpit? Why is it the exception and not the rule for a son of the so-called good families to enter our rabbinical colleges? I know the reasons that have been given by our religious diagnosticians. Chief among these is the material one that other professions pay better and that the Jewish parent, practical as he is, in selecting a career for his son has his eye directed to the material welfare. But then it may be asked in turn, granting that this is true,—and I know instances in which it was the deciding factor–why does not this great work so appeal to rich parents who can leave their sons a competency as will place them

beyond all need, or why does it not appeal to rich young men into whose calculations the material consideration need not enter at all? The cause, therefore, lies deeper than the mere question of money. Then there is the reason dwelt upon in the open letter to which I have referred, viz., the dependence of the pulpit on the good will of congregational magnates and the disdain in which the position and the cause are held; it is claimed that, knowing the conditions that obtain in many Jewish congregations, self-respecting, high-minded and idealistic young men hesitate before subjecting themselves to the indignities which many an occupant of the Jewish pulpit is compelled to undergo at the hands of rich vulgarians and upstart parvenus, who often hold a commanding place in congregational councils. And then, to mention only one more of the reasons that have been given for this state of affairs, viz., that the Jewish pulpit is not peculiar in this, that it is a sign of the times, that the same cry is being heard in Christian denominations, and that leaders of thought in the Christian world are bewailing this same tendency of college-bred young men to think of the ministry last as a life-work, when sixty or seventy years ago it held the first place. And the mediaeval proverb which has done service so often is called into play, *wie es sich christelt juedelt es sich*. That this same phenomenon is visible in the Christian world can not be disputed, but I take it that the cause if absolutely different than with us. I remember reading about a year ago a remarkable article written by one of the strong thinkers of the English Church entitled "The Reluctance of Young Men to Take

Orders;" in this study the writer pointed to this same state of affairs that I am discussing. The reason, however, which he gave was that the established creed of the English Church, which the candidate for orders was compelled to subscribe to, demanded belief in dogmas which are outgrown, and he contended that until this creed is modified so as to bring it into harmony with the intellectual outlook of the present, young men who are best worth having, young men who will not juggle with terms, young men to whom truth is the first thing in the world no matter what is second, will be kept away from the church. Much the same must be the case in the Presbyterian Church, with its medieaval confession of faith, which has driven many strong men from that communion. But this Christian condition does not hold in Judaism. There is no such problem among us. Judaism requires no subscription to dogmas or doctrines at variance with reason or the intellectual standards of modern man. With us there is thorough intellectual freedom. Hence this suggestion that the reason why the rabbinical office is not sought by the intellectual and social elite is to be found in the similar conditions prevailing in the Christian world does not hold, for the parallel is incomplete; of course one fact can not be blinked as present in both the Christian and the Jewish camps which is of weight, and this is that where in a former age religion occupied the first and foremost place and all things were subservient to it, our scientific age has directed the view of men to the tangible and visible things of earth and the spiritual and invisible have been relegated to the second place. This,

together with the other reasons which I have hinted at above, explain in part the phenomenon under discussion. But it is not the whole explanation. These are the conditions outside of the pulpit and the ministry. May there not be reasons also within our charmed circle? Is it not possible that the reason for the lesser consideration in which the pulpit is held may be found in the thought flowing from our text, "like priest, like people?" May it not be that in some measure the pulpit is at fault and that in some degree at least we can so correct certain conditions as to raise the pulpit and the profession in the estimation of the people? Let us then look into and examine the ways and the methods in vogue and in the spirit of mutual helpfulness try to arrive at some serviceable results.

I have no doubt that there will be weak-kneed brethren who will shake their heads doubtfully as to the wisdom and propriety of such a proceeding. Such will think even if they do not openly say it, that the pulpit has critics and detractors enough without and that it is the part of loyalty for us who stand in the pulpit to defend it, show forth its strength and conceal its weaknesses if it has any. Surely the chauvinistic policy is always a mistaken one; the true patriot is not he who shouts the loudest and subscribes to the dictum, "my country, right or wrong," but it is he who after recognizing wrongs and shortcomings calls attention to them and makes the right take the place of the wrong, the true the place of the false; so also in every walk of life; קושטא קאי שיקרא לא קאי "truth endures, falsehood endures not," however assiduously we may strive to bolster it up; if there be

shortcomings in our profession then in God's name let us be strong enough and brave enough to recognize them and name them; if there be tendencies in the ministry that conduce toward lowering the pulpit from the high place it should hold in the estimation of the people, then let us pluck them out of our midst; if it be indeed true, ככהן כעם that the people's attitude has been determined by any lack among the rabbis, then it is our first duty to consider this carefully and do what we can individually and collectively toward betterment and improvement. I do not presume for one moment to say that this is universally the case. I recall with reverential feeling the many tried and true men who have shed lustre upon the Jewish name by their life-long toil in the pulpit, who by their learning graced the position, by their devotion ennobled it, by their fealty to principle dignified it, by their helpfulness to the people glorified it; the roll of rabbis known and unknown, sung and unsung, who for over two thousand years have led the Jewish communities the world over is indeed Israel's roll of honor! nor has the glory all departed; there are still all over this world, in other lands and in our own, men occupying the pulpits who are worthy of standing in the company of the best of all the ages; this goes almost without saying; but with all this it has yet happened in the experience of most of us to have been forced to the conclusion that there does not exist to-day that traditional Jewish reverential sentiment toward the rabbi which found expression in the words מורא רבך כמורא שמים. This brings us to the crucial point of the subject in hand. If this sentiment has disappeared what can we do toward resuscitating it

at least in part in the face of all the difficulties in the way caused by the change of front of the world in regard to religion and religious concerns. Of all things let us not lull our consciences to sleep by the application of the stupifying narcotic of *laissez aller*, that it is useless to attempt to stem the tide and that individual effort in conflict with universal sentiment is like a pigmy battering at an impregnable fortress. Ah! but it is individualism that counts just here; the individual rabbi in the individual community; you and I are in great measure individually responsible; it is the course of each one rabbi in each one community that is a mighty factor in determining the attitude of the community toward the cause the rabbi represents; since the day of the prophet Ezekiel this is good Jewish doctrine; so then in this aspect this is of vital burning concern to us; much as he would, not one can disencumber himself from this obligation if he looks upon his calling as a sacred trust and not merely as the spade wherewith to dig.

First, then, there is here as everywhere the personal equation. The respect for the pulpit and the cause of Judaism rises and falls with its occupant. It is notorious that much of the contempt which was felt for the pulpit in quite a number of communities in an earlier day was due to the fact that many unworthy men who, were no more fitted to preach the word of religious truth than a mountebank, palmed themselves off as rabbis upon unsuspecting communities. These were frequently individuals of unsavory character and they brought the calling into disrepute. This unfortunate conditions of affairs was one of the reasons that led our great leader, Dr.

Wise, of blessed memory, to agitate so long and so constantly for the foundation of a theological seminary where men might be trained who would raise the tone of the profession and from whose ranks the Jewish communities who had been in so many instances so ill-served might secure guides with a truer perspective of the necessities and proprieties of the situation. God forbid that I be understood as claiming that there were no worthy men in American Jewish pulpits before the Hebrew Union College was founded, but there can be no manner of coubt that while a number of renowned leaders whose names stand highest on the register, were at the head of some congregations, the smaller communities were in a large measure at the mercy of men of whom the least said the better. That condition at any rate has been improved and the scandalous state of affairs of that earlier day has passed away, let us hope, forever and for aye. From the contemplation of the sorry condition into which men of that ilk degraded the pulpit we are startlingly impressed with the tremendous significance of the personal equation. Truly, "like priest, like people"; the people took their cue and their view from the preacher's acts, and so do they still today, so will they in the future. May I be permitted to paraphrase an ancient word of warning to make it fit the case in hand? "Ye rabbis, be careful of your words and acts . . . ; the congregations who listen to you and are guided by you may drink and die and the name of Heaven be profaned."

In our individual self-searching and probing there comes this further question, do we take our work so seriously that we place it above all else? Are we

determined to force the recognition of the dignity of the pulpit even from the reluctant? Have we made of ourselves "a defenced city, an iron pillar and brazen walls" against the modern "kings of Judah and the people of the land?" Have we abiding faith in the word that came to Jeremiah, "they shall fight thee, but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee." For just as truly as the life of the prophet of old was a fight and a struggle so is that of the prophet of to-day, for that is what the true preacher is and must be when all is told. Have we set up a certain ideal for our work? Have we the strength to withstand the presumptuous demands that individuals wise in their own conceit, undertake to make upon us from time to time? Have we set out with the purpose to preach Judaism and to give the Jewish interpretation of the facts of life? Have we persisted in this, for this is after all our work and our mission as Jewish preachers in spite of the constant and insistent cry that has been dinned into the ears of all of us for less Judaism, less religion in the pulpit and more topics of the day, scientific talks, artistic analyses, literary digests? For let us never forget this, that if we are anything at all we are experts in religious and ethical teaching, and that, too, from the Jewish standpoint; here we have the right to demand a hearing; in all else, unless there be universal geniuses among us, we are only amateurs, and we cheapen our cause in the estimation of the discerning, whose judgment, after all, is the only one worth considering, by lecturing on all subjects under the sun.

Let us keep our pulpits true to their purpose, giving them a character all their own; the best informed among us can not attempt to vie with the college or university teacher in his specialty; a fine thinker has written very recently, "the less the preacher tries to compete with the lecturer and the journalist in these times of specialization the better"; in this day of the magazine and the popular lecture the people certainly need not us to popularize the researches of students; let us not attempt to compete with these agencies, for even though the people be interested for a time it will form a Pyrrhic victory. The ultimate loss will far outweigh the temporary triumph; our Jewish literature, our Jewish endeavor, our Jewish point of view, these are our specialty and though our building erected on these foundations rise but slowly, it will rise surely and we will do yoeman's work in the cause wherein we are enlisted.

Further, brethren, do we always put our cause first and ourselves second? Have we the purpose to make the pulpit respected no matter what the effect on our personal popularity may be? Is it not sadly true that there is a tendency to-day in many rabbinical quarters to stand pat with the people at the expense of rabbincial dignity? Most ingenious devices are being invented whereby the good will of parishioners may be gained and retained; again "like priest, like people"; how can the people have the proper respect for the position if the rabbi descends to the use of the methods of the ward politician, if he preaches in season and out of season that all is well in Jewry, that the life of the people can not be improved upon;

the word may become current among the people that the rabbi is a nice fellow, that he is a good mixer, that he is clubable, and so forth; he may advance thereby his own personal welfare but he contributes nothing, nay, on the contrary he detracts from the dignity and worth wherewith he should hedge his position about; you remember that apt word of the Talmud (Ket. 105b): "If a learned man is overly popular with his townspeople it is not due to the fact that they recognize his excellence, but that he does not correct them for their faults." The truth speaker, the man with a message, has neither the time nor the inclination to work out plans and schemes for winning the favor of his constituents; this is nothing more nor less than a form of personal bribery; work לשם שמים is the only standard worthy of men in our profession, yes, of true men in any profession or occupation; in my own city a noted judge, who has gained the highest place in the estimation of his townspeople because of his fearlessness and his faithfulness to high ideals was tendered recently a testimonial by his fellow citizens upon his retirement from the bench. At the close of his address in response to the compliments showered upon him he used certain words which bear repetition and comport well with what I have said on this portion of my theme: "Let a man stand as the Duke of Wellington was said to stand—four square to all the winds that blow. Let him, as Captain Letterblair says in the play, be honest because honesty is the best policy, and even if it is not, be honest anyway. Let him stand, as Emerson says, squarely on his feet and the great huge world will come round to

him, and if it does not come round to him, let it go where it belongs."

Another point, friends. Do we all give our *essential* task the consideration it should have? This essential task is without a doubt preaching. Now preaching that shall appeal to earnest minded men and women, preaching that shall invest a pulpit with strength, preaching that shall be worthy the name requires the best thought and the most conscientious preparation that we can give to it. One of the greatest preachers, if not the greatest this country has ever had, constantly and consistently refused to be drawn into any side paths and into any side work that would consume his energies; he held that he was a preacher first and last, and that all his strongest endeavor and best energy belonged to his pulpit. Must it not follow, as does the night the day, that such a pulpit will hold a very high place among the influences in the people's life, and must it not follow, contrariwise, that the pulpit whence commonplace platitudes and empty phrases are preached week after week will be below par in the estimation of all who are capable of forming a judgment? Among my acquaintances there is none whom I esteem more highly than a college-bred man who is deeply interested in Jewish matters and yet rarely attends the synagog wherewith his family is affiliated. I was curious to know the reason for this and the answer I received is significant. Said my friend: "I will be perfectly frank. I am anxious to attend service and would were there anything in the sermon to edify or stimulate me, but the man who stands in our pulpit does not think, and hence gives me nothing to think

about. His sermons are words, words, words, and instead of putting me into the mood that a sermon should, they irritate me because there is no religious depth or soundness to them." Now, these words were spoken, not by a carping critic, but by a thoughtful, earnest, religiously-minded man and they furnish food for reflection. Is our pulpit work the outcome of hard, sustained and constant thought or do we take it lightly? Are we scholarly-minded or simply practically bent? Are we sensation mongers or truth seekers? Is our pulpit work a sacred trust or only a means of livelihood? Is our best thought given to each and every sermon or are we content with a few hours' preparation? Thinking is hard work, the hardest kind of work. Is this hardest kind of work apparent in the pulpit output? These are the questions which occurred to me after the conversation noted above. They have been with me ever since and I have expressed aloud to you what I have been considering silently. I submit the matter to you for judgment. Certainly it can not be gainsaid that the pulpit must be thoughtful if it is to obtain and retain respect and estimation. Again ככהן כעם; the people sitting under such preaching will be impressed with the dignity of the rabbi's message, the cause that he in his person represents must gain in every way.

One thing more, brethren, and I will have finished. I have been invigorated more than I can say by my recent studies of the utterances and writings of the great rabbis who were the protagonists of the reform movement in Judaism. The principle of reform meant something for them. It was not an empty

phrase. I could not help but compare the attitude of Geiger and Holdheim, the Adlers and Einhorn, Samuel Hirsch and Auerbach, Salomon and Frankfurter, and others of the participants in the rabbinical conferences of the fifth decade of the nineteenth century with the hesitating position of many of our number to-day. Ours is presumably and nominally a conference of reform rabbis. We are rabbis of Reform Congregations. Do we stand for principle? Or are we willing to put principle on or off like a garment? Are reform and prophetic, universalistic Judaism living issues with us or are we, too, being swept from off our feet by the wave of reaction that is threatening to engulf a certain section of Jewry? The cry has gone forth, backwards! The banner is unfurled with the watchwords mediaevalism, sentimental romanticism, Zionism. Ours it is to meet that cry with the counter-shout forward! Ours it is to hold aloft our banner with the motto, reform, universalistic Judaism, world-wide Messianism! If the people are confused, if they know not what their Judaism really signifies it is due in great part to the fact that unmistakable and strong pronouncements are not made from our pulpits as constantly and as firmly as they should be. Here and there a powerful word is spoken, but one misses that general united effort which alone can produce the impression of strength. I plead then for constancy to the ideas and ideals of our reform movement! Let us not be affrighted by any metropolitan surrender to Ghettoism and reactionism. If the pulpit stands firm and unmoved in the proclamation of all that our American Reform Judaism, as preached and fought for by

Isaac M. Wise and our other great leaders, signifies the people will fall into line. Let there be no wavering, no half-hearted doubts, no weak-kneed surrender on the part of those who occupy the leaders place, and this must react upon the led; like priest, like people. We have principles, let us preach them. We have ideals, let us proclaim them. To prophetic Judaism belongs the future; let not our faith wax weak; we, too, who lead the way to the new promised land, the Kingdom of God in all the earth, must needs be strong and of good courage, as Joshua the leader into the promised land of old was bidden to be. Only let us not despair nor wax faint of heart. Let us not be confused by the cries resounding in the Jewish arena but convinced that we are the vanguard, continue our course undismayed and unafraid until the very end.

I have done. I thank you for the patience with which you have listened to what I have had to say. These things have long been in my heart. I have brought them to your attention for what they are worth in all earnestness and sincerity. May they have been received in the same spirit. We are beginning to-night the sixteenth session of our conference. May our deliberations tend to quicken the enthusiasm of our people for our glorious faith; may the spirit of love and brotherhood, friendship and peace prevail here; may we bear constantly in mind the intent of the word "like priest, like people," and so be faithful to the responsibilities that rest on us as the messengers of the good tidings of the Lord who may be with us and guide us in the light of His truth. Amen!

"WE CAN PREVAIL"*

IT is just thirty years lacking one month since the first company of rabbis, educated in an American Jewish theological school were consecrated to their life's work. On that summer day, July 14, in the year 1883, the representatives of American Jewry from all sections of the country had gathered in this city to be present on the occasion that witnessed the realization of the dreams and hopes of many years. Enthusiasm ran very high; strong men wept tears of joy when at the supreme moment the unforgetable founder and first president of the Hebrew Union College ordained his first four spiritual sons as rabbis in Israel. Since that day many have been ordained in like manner, but that first ordination ceremony was unique in that it opened a new chapter in the history of American Judaism. It is altogether natural that that scene in which he was one of the participants should be very vivid to-day in the mind of the present speaker. Well nigh all who took part in those exercises as well as a great number of those who witnessed the ceremonny, have been called to their eternal reward; their memory is indeed a blessing.

The record established by the Hebrew Union College and the growth of Jewish congregational activity under the leadership of its graduates during the past three decades, give ample testimony to the

*Baccalaureate Sermon at Hebrew Union College Commencement, June 14, 1913, Cincinnati, Ohio.

lasting character of the work of Isaac M. Wise and his devoted followers. The little one has become a thousand. A great institution has developed from very small beginnings. Momentous changes have taken place in Jewish life in this country during the quarter century past; the Jewish population, owing to enforced immigration from Eastern Europe, has increased by the hundreds of thousands; new problems unknown to past generations have arisen; activities undreamt of in the mid nineteenth century are engrossing the attention of the present generation; but in all this change and readjustment, in all the new difficulties and problems that have arisen, the institution at whose latest graduation we are now assisting, has maintaned its standing and its prestige as a great academy of Jewish learning and as the source whence issues the stream of inspiration for our American communities. Hence go forth the leaders who bring the message of a living faith to the contemporary generation, young men who, having learned here the continuing story of the development of the Jewish spirit in all the centuries agone, find their life work in applying the touchstone of Judaism's eternal truths to present needs and conditions and in interpreting those truths in terms of modern life as messengers of the living God who is revealing himself constantly to-day, as he has in all the ages past.

My purpose to-day is to emphasize this feature of the work that stretches before you, my dear young friends and colleagues soon to be. You are about to be enrolled in the great company of Jewish teachers who, during an interval of years numbered by thous-

ands and in all lands under the sun, have labored in the service of God and their fellow-men. Though living in this twentieth century in a land unknown even by name to the earliest leaders of our faith in its first home, you still are spirit of their spirit and are to be the spiritual guides to the communities in which you shall live and work, even as they were in their time and place. The opening paragraph of the Pirke Abot which speaks of the chain of Jewish tradition extending from Moses down to the teachers of that day is capable of ever-changing application. Each and every age, each and every earnest and sincere teacher, furnishes a new link to that chain of Jewish tradition. What was eternal and vital in the message of Moses and the prophets is as significant to-day as it ever was. And the eternal teachings of the Jewish leaders of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is as directly in line with that everlasting message of Moses and the prophets as were the high teachings of the men mentioned in the Pirke Abot. Geiger and Einhorn and Wise were as important to and significant for their generation as were Hillel and Gamliel and Johanan ben Zakkai for theirs. And as disciples of Geiger and Einhorn through the present distinguished president of this institution, and of Wise through all the traditions of this College, you are the latest link in this chain of Jewish tradition that is traced back to Moses at Sinai. From this day you will be aiding in that visible structure of the spirit at which all those who have gone before you have labored. Anxious questions must be presenting themselves to you as to the nature of the task which lies before you.

Without doubt hopes and fears are strangely intermingled in your vision of the days to come. Let us consider some of these, as they appear on the horizon of the future that now stretches before you.

The Scriptural section from which this afternoon's portion was read contains the famous story of the twelve men who were sent by Moses to reconnoiter the land of Canaan, and to bring back report of the land and its inhabitants to the people. Ten of the men reported in disheartening terms. Though giving glowing accounts of the fertility of the country, they declared that it would be impossible for the people to conquer the land because they saw there giants and great fortified cities. Two of the company, however, Joshua and Caleb, differed with their colleagues and enheartened the people by declaring that if they would, they could go up against the land and possess it כי יכול נוכל לה "for we can indeed prevail against it."

This graphic narrative lends itself finely to our purpose to-day. The land of promise lies before you now as it has on a similar occasion before all who occupied the place in which you find yourself to-day. You, too, are men who are being sent forth to reconnoiter that land of promise. Will you be like the ten, seeing only the difficulties and the obstacles, afraid to go forward, or will you be like the two filled with a glowing enthusiasm by which you, though conscious of the difficulties and the obstacles, can still rise triumphant over them and exclaim, "we will go forth and struggle bravely and heroically, כי יכול נוכל לה, for we can prevail against all the barriers that will arise against us in our forward jour-

ney." "All things good are as difficult as they are rare," said the great philosopher, and he spoke out of a profound experience of life. Whatever is worth while is greatly worth while. Are you going to do valiant service in the cause to which you have given yourselves, standing out as did Joshua and Caleb with the cheering call "Onward," or are you going to be men of little spirit, unfit for leadership in the great endeavors which are marking the earnest spirits of our generation? For you it is to answer this question each to himself. For me it is to be as helpful to you as I can by placing before you some facts which careful observation of the present situtation among us has disclosed to my view.

It were to render you a poor service indeed were I to conceal from you the difficulties of the situation. It is just because there are these difficulties, that you and such as you are needed. Were all things as they should be in Jewry, there were no need of rabbis and teachers. The promised land which is always before us requires in its gradual conquest the overcoming of the obstacles. The ten men saw aright when they saw the gigantic difficulties, but they saw only half; the two men recognized the difficulties also, but they saw also the other half, the possibility to overcome them. The ten rested in despair, the two pressed forward from despair to hope. They saw the whole picture where the others saw only a fragment.

Well, then, there are the giants in the land still today, giants blocking the cause of our onward religious progress with which we all must reckon and

against which we must be constantly active. Let me designate a few of them, not by way of discouraging, but of enlightening you. If we know our foes, we are ready to grapple with them. There is in the first place the towering giant of spiritual obtuseness. This looms very large on the horizon. Comparatively few men and women amongst us are spiritually minded. The great majority simply do not care for the things in which you and I are most interested. They scarcely understand our language when we expatiate upon the things of the spirit as little as the prophet's generation understood him when he declared that not by might and not by strength, but by the spirit does man prevail. This giant of spiritual obtuseness will be impeding your way all the time. You will rain blow upon blow upon him, and seemingly make little if any impression. But now and then you will find a weak spot in his armor and lay him low. At any rate, you are going forth to enlist in this age-old struggle that has been going on in the Jewish world from the days that the children of Israel, enamored of the flesh pots of Egypt, arose against the great leader, Moses. You, too, will have your moments of despair as had even that superlative genius and as have had all other leaders, but you may not rest there. The work needs you. You are fighting the fight of the spirit; you are enlisted in the cause of righteousness. What if you are only one against many? Numbers do not count in the affairs of the spirit. You remember the famous words attributed to Judah Maccabee in answer to the fainthearted who trembled at the sight of the great multitude of the

enemy "with the God of Heaven it is all one to deliver us with a large number or with a small one. Let all the nations know that there is One who will forever save and protect Israel." This is the spirit that must inform you for you will frequently stand alone or in a small minority against the great majority of the spiritually obtuse. But you are doing God's work. You have chosen your path. With the will to do, and the purpose to achieve, you will contribute to the final victory which shall come as surely as some day mankind will reach the promised land to which all the prophets of the race have pointed, the golden age of justice, love and righteousnness on earth.

Closely allied to this son of Anak is his brother, epicurean materialism. Obtuseness of spirit and crass materialism are the obverse and the reverse of the same shield. This giant has had a long life. In the prophet's day his motto was "let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die." Through all the ages he has rung the changes on this motto and today it is still his watchword. He has his followers by the hundreds of thousands now as always. You will be meeting them at every turn, gross materialists who have no thought above the earth earthy, loud vulgarians who gorge their stomachs while their souls are starved. For them life is largely a quip and a jest. They want to be amused. The number of such is legion. They are a great army. When you encounter them constantly and continually, will you, terrified by the great proportions of this giant, wax faint, or spurred to greater efforts by the difficulty of overcoming him, will you exclaim also here, "we will continue unafraid

for we can conquer?" As Jewish teachers you may never overlook the fact that Judaism has always maintained a sane attitude in this matter. Asceticism is not a part of its program. It recognizes that man is the child of two worlds, the material and the spiritual. In its true interpretation it maintains the proper balance between the two. In your contention with the crass and vulgar materialism of the generation, you must marshal your forces carefully. Mere denunciation avails little. Though granting the right and the propriety for the human creature to satisfy the craving for enjoyment within measure, you must stand in season and out of season as the protagonists of the idealization of life and its spiritual possibilities. The blight that most threatens our society is this vulgarization of its aims and the materialization of its views. The very prosperity with which so many have been favored in this land has been responsible in great part for this. In pointing out this condition and demanding a proper consideration for the ideals of life, you will often be struggling alone. You will be swimming against the current. But if the men at the helm of our congregations have any mission it is this of standing bravely by the standard that they have elected. The great function of the pulpit among us today is to stand four-square to the ideal interpretations of life. How you will do it depends altogether upon yourselves. But first of all and most of all you must by your preaching and by your practice be a living illustration of the sincerity of your professions. In our calling, as in every other, it is most easy to follow the line of

least resistance. In the last instance the rabbi in his conduct and in his person must go in and out among the people as the representative of the high and ideal. As such they must and they want to look up to him. The supreme rule of his life must be, not what must I do to be personally popular, but what must I do to help my people to a better comprehension of the ideal implications of existence? The cause first, last and all the time. Thus and thus only will the materially disposed be impressed. This has been the effective weapon in the immemorial contest of the idealists with their constant foe, epicurean materialism. Thus armed you will do effective service in the high cause to which you give yourselves this day.

A third of these gigantic foes that you will be encountering constantly is ignorance both within and without the ranks. The rabbi is primarily a teacher; such is the tradition from all our past, such must be our aim and purpose now. If you are to conquer the land you are about to enter, it will be largely through the arts and the achievements of the teacher. The ignorance of Judaism, of its past, its present purpose and its interpretation of the future is colossal. You will find it in the congregations and without them. You will find it among young and old. Far from being discouraged by this condition, it should nerve you to the greatest determination to contribute what you can towards overcoming it. You will also find frequently no very great longing on the part of the multitude to take advantage of the opportunities you are offering them to better their

ignorance. Even this must spur you to only greater efforts. As a teacher in the pulpit and out of it, the rabbi has his greatest opportunity. It is because people are so largely ignorant of the Jewish interpretations of the facts of life that they follow in so many instances latter day isms and doxies which are at best likely to be only passing fads. If such are deserting the synagogue it is largely through ignorance of what Judaism teaches and stands for, and if they are thus ignorant may it not be due in part to dereliction on the part of the leaders?

But it is not only here that your opportunity as teachers will lie. You will find possibly in the very early days of your ministry, if you have your eyes open to the conditions round about us, an appalling condition of affairs among the younger generation of recent immigrants to our country. They have no sympathy with the religion as practiced by their fathers. The free spirit of our American environment does not comport with the traditional practice and interpretation of rabbinical Judaism. The younger generation thus at variance with their fathers' outlook upon Judaism, know little or nothing of our reform Judaism. What they know of it is largely misinformation. They have heard reform Judaism denounced and reformers misrepresented. They are simply ignorant of our aims and purposes. Because of their ignorance, or worse, the misunderstanding of what reform Judaism represents and stands for, they will have none of it. Here again is opportunity for your function as teachers. You will go forth as graduates of this academy of Jewish learning representing

what is known as the reform or liberal tendency. As such you will stand before your world, be it large or small, with a distinct program, the interpretation of the everlasting truths of Judaism in the light of modern thought and our modern American conditions. For you it will be as it is for all of us who stand in the rabbi's place, to aim to dispel the ignorance of this generation which is now growing up apart, out of sympathy with the religion of their fathers and to acquaint them with the teachings and achievements of reform Judaism. What the rabbis of the nineteenth century did for the earlier immigration to this country, who owing to the teachings they received founded and maintained our reform congregations, that must the rabbis now do for the youth of the later immigration that is growing up in all parts of the land. Through the reform movement Judaism adapted itself to the modern environment. The reform movement is the saving element of Judaism in the modern age. Because reform had a free field to develop in this land, Judaism is stronger here than in any country in the world. If it is to continue thus strong and grow still stronger, the rabbis must exercise the teaching function, enlighten the rising generation and draw them within the lines of our congregations, the representative organizations of Judaism. I know of no finer service that you can render than this of bringing the light of knowledge where there is now ignorance of what you and we stand for.

And there is the further angle of this contest with ignorance in the larger attitude towards the entire non-Jewish environment. Here, too, you will have a

great work to do. You will stand before the general community as the Jewish leader. Time and again it will fall to your lot to meet with gross misunderstanding and misrepresentation of our faith and our teachings. Though you will never seek polemics, you cannot keep quiet when occasion arises to defend your own. In many a community Jew and Judaism have a high standing because of the fine service of rabbis as teachers and as men unafraid when the proper word must be spoken. Of such may you be in the career that is now opening for you.

Many other obstacles and difficulties might be mentioned but I have indicated enough to make it clear that you will have sufficient to occupy you all your lives in your progress towards the goal of your aspirations, your land of promise. But though there be the obstacles and the difficulties they are as nothing compared with the endowment you are blessed with. What distinguished Joshua and Caleb from their fellows was the spirit of enthusiasm to go forth and grapple with the obstacles. That you surely have or else you would not have persevered through all these years of your college life. Having that, you go forth armed most strongly. Whatever be the outer circumstances of your life, and may they be always happy, you must conquer if this abides with you. And the best manner to retain this enthusiasm is to feed it from the perpetual spring, and for the rabbi that perpetual spring is the knowledge of books and of men. If your enthusiasm begins to lag because of the discouragements in your world, retire to your study and to communion with the great spirits of

the past and you will soon find yourself again and look upon life from the point of view of eternity. In the serene company of prophet and seer and philosopher and scholar, the petty annoyances that fret us soon dissolve into thin air and we emerge refreshed and enheartened, ready once more for the tasks that life may bring.

Because of its importance I would like to dwell for a few moments longer on this matter of scholarship in the rabbinical office.

The great changes in the life of the Jews during the past century have had their effect also on the rabbinical office and its occupants. Notably has this been the case in these free lands of the west. It is a far cry from the functioning of the rabbi of a mediaeval Jewish community isolated from contact with the outer world to the multifarious activities of the rabbi of a congregation in a modern American city. In such a mediaeval community the rabbi could devote himself in uninterrupted quiet to the pursuit of learning: this was the be all and end all of his life: there were few communal activities that broke in upon his learned leisure. How different the life of the rabbi in active service today. There are a hundred and one calls upon his time to distract his attention. His interests as the leader of a congregation, and possibly also as a leader in the community at large are many and varied. Recognizing though we do the great difference between the work of such a modern rabbi and his predecessor of an age behind us, I yet make bold to claim that the rabbi's first concern is learning and scholarship. Unless this all else is vain. Unless he build upon this as a foundation he

builds upon sand. Communal activity is of course necessary in these days, but unless the rabbi so arranges his life that study and the pursuit of scholarly aims holds first place, he is untrue to the finest traditions of his office. If the rabbi places scholarly aims first as he should, then it matters little what he places second or third. By this he will be able to feed his enthusiasm constantly and to keep burning the flame of his optimism.

And finally you have the finest possession of all for your undertaking. You have youth, with its generous impulses and its great possibilities. I hope you are not too sophisticated and have not the age weariness that oppresses so many of our young men in these days of ours. With youth all things are possible. It is the spirit of youth that declares "I can prevail." It is the spirit of youth that keeps the man on the firing line, ready always to do his part even when the hair begins to whiten. The hopes of the generations as they pass are centered in the young men who devote themselves to the tasks of leadership and undertake the responsibilities which attach thereto. The unknown future is hiding from you the course that your life shall take, but whatsoever may betide, whether you will be called to places that men call great or small, remember always that "there is no great and no small to the soul that maketh all." In all our communities, be they large, be they little, we need men, young men, men of the youthful spirit whatever be the count of their years, we need the leaders endowed with the intrepidity of the two men who in the face of a majority numbering five to one, and in the presence of seemingly gigantic difficutlies,

spoke the brave and great word yachol nuchal lah "we can prevail."

So would I say to you today, you can prevail. Many have preceded you and have prevailed. You may remember the fine lines of the poet philospoher:

> So nigh is grandeur to our dust
> So near is God to man,
> When Duty whispers low, Thou must,
> The youth replies, I can.

A great work lies ahead of you. Judaism needs you. All upward striving needs you. The company of the ideally aspiring throughout the world needs you. God needs you to do His work in the world. Go forth then, as champions of the spirit, go forth as messengers of the Most High, teachers of the people from whom they will seek knowledge. Go forth as the latest hope of our Alma Mater, the nourishing mother of our American Jewish congregations. Keep burning the perpetual lamp of service in the temple of your lives, replenishing it constantly from the never failing source of scholarly pursuit and youthful enthusiasm. So will your lives be blessed and you will be enrolled in that great company of immortal spirits so eloquently described by the sage in his wonderful account of Israel's worthies as "those through whom the Lord manifested great glory, those who were leaders of the people by their counsels and by their understanding men of learning for the people; wise and eloquent in their teachings and through knowledge and might fit helpers of the people." Of such may you be through God's help and God's blessing during all your lives. Amen!

ISRAEL, THE INTERNATIONAL PEOPLE*

NEVER during the twoscore years and more since our Union of American Hebrew Congregations was founded by the great leader, Isaac M. Wise, and the devoted co-workers who assisted him in giving form and substance to what had been the dream of his waking and sleeping hours for a quarter of a century, has this organization met in so troubled, so critical, so portentous a time in the history of the world, and the history of Jewry, as this. Though we, in this blessed land, are far away from the frightful scenes of unspeakable carnage in the devastated countries of the Old World, still we can not get away from the influence of the world woe, nor would we. All our thinking is affected in some way or other by the crisis through which the nations are now passing. Victor Hugo once wrote that Waterloo changed the front of the universe. In a much comprehensive sense this will prove true of the present Titanic struggle. Things will never be again quite as they were before the summer of 1914. Values will be altered. The men and the women in the warring lands will have an altogether different outlook upon the temporalities and the eternities. The old order is passing for many of the embattled peoples. A new order shall dawn. The night is still black, very black, but out of the black-

*Convention Sermon at meeting of Union of American Hebrew Congregations, January 15, 1917, at Baltimore, Md.

ness light shall emerge. They who are now suffering and agonizing, they who are walking in darkness shall see a great light, the light of advancing progress, the light of liberating freedom.

Of no element of the populations of European lands will this prove more true than of our co-religionists Because of the disabilities of the Jews in Russia and Roumania, because of the indescribable suffering, misery and woe, greater far than that of others, which they are experiencing in the Eastern war zone, notably in Poland, there are particular problems for us, as Jews, in addition to the general human problems that concern us in common with all our fellowmen.

America the Center of Jewish Life

The center of gravity of Jewish life has shifted to America. We are witnessing a new phase of our centuried history in the making. As once Palestine was the seat of supremacy in Jewry, and then Babylon, and then Spain, and then Poland, so now it is coming to be the United States. In all truth, שכינה במערבא, the new revelation of God's working in Jewry is here in this Western sphere. Never has the command of God spoken more surely, or more impressively, than it is sounding in these days in ears not deaf in spiritual messages. And that word is being addressed particularly to us of the house of Israel in this land of promise of these latter days. If ever the burden of the spirit of the Lord was upon a people it is now upon us. Woe unto us if we have not vision! Woe unto us if in these new days of revelation we are not ready to say, in the words spoken by our fathers as they faced the mount of revelation

in that ancient time—נעשה ונשמע! "We will do and we will hear!" Woe unto us, if we are unmindful of the mighty responsibility which our exceptional position as citizens of this free land places upon our shoulders! Unto us our harried brethren, subjected to countless woes and nameless ills, are looking for succor and for counsel. In the plan of Providence the blessing and prosperity which are ours here in America are to become the instruments of salvation for our brethren. This is the latest chapter in the marvelous story which began in dim antiquity, when, in response to the driving call, לך לך מארצך, Abraham left his birthplace and his father's house to live for the truth which had come unto him and to become a blessing unto many nations.

The First Loss of Palestine

Since then how frequently that command has sounded unto the descendants of Abraham at critical periods in their history! Again and again that same bidding became imperative and, whether they would or not, it had to be obeyed. It was, in all truth, the command of God, though at the time it scarcely seemed so. Thus was it in the days of the first great catastrophe, the conquest of Jerusalem by the Babylonian king and the leading of the people into captivity. Then was the people bidden to get them out of their birthplace, out of their father's house. But was the land to which they were transported aught but the land of trouble? Was it possible that God's blessing rested there, that God's work could be per-

formed there, so that this departure from their land could work out for good? Indeed, it seemed not possible that this could prove to be the case. All seemed lost, the future absolutely hopeless. Exiled into a strange land, it is no wonder that the people cried out: "Our bones are dried up, our hope is lost, we are clean cut off."

And yet the years of that Babylonian sojourn were fraught with tremendous consequences for Judaism. It was then that it became clear that the spirit of Judaism could flourish even away from Palestine, that the truth was not dependent upon any soil, however dear or sacred. Then it was that the synagog, as the house of prayer, came into being, and the conviction was brought home to the people that, although the Temple of Jerusalem was destroyed, God could still be approached in these houses of prayer in this strange land. Then it was that the universal ideas in Judaism were strengthened and fostered—the universal ideas that culminated in the remarkable speeches of that soaring genius, the prophet of the close of that period of the Babylonian exile, the man whose name we do not even know, but whose glorious messages of consolation, forming the latter portion of our present Biblical Book of Isaiah, are among the world's supreme religious masterpieces. For this mighty spirit God was God not only of Israel but of all nations. Israel, it is true, is God's chosen; but chosen for what? For service. In these speeches it is that we find the famous conception of Israel as the עבד יהוה, the servant of the Lord. Through the suffering in the exile Israel advanced

in the scale of spiritual power and might. This universal idea of the true inwardness of Israel's work in the world, wherever it might be, to serve in the cause of God's truth, is presented time and again in the pages of this Babylonian Jew. Through all the dark days of which Israel's history is so full his words have brought hope and peace to unnumbered generations. The words of his message of consolation were an ever-present enheartenment in the wretchedness and misery that were Israel's portion—"Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God," Israel as the Messiah of the nations, Israel as a Priest people, destined to serve humanity through suffering and travail: this is the mighty contribution to our religious treasure trove by this our prophet. The Christian church, of course, interpreted, and interprets all these noted "servant of the Lord" passages in the light of prophecies, foretelling the career of Jesus of Nazareth. But this is a forced interpretation; as has been well said, the burden of the thought of our prophet is that not *one* Jew, but *the* Jew, not one individual, but the Jewish people, is the suffering and, finally, the achieving servant of the Lord. Significant, too, of the universality of the outlook of this high visioned spirit is his hailing a heathen king as the Lord's anointed; thus does he designate Cyrus, king of Perisa, the conqueror of Babylon, the mighty monarch of those days. What though this king was not of the house of Israel, he was yet the instrument of God, the King of all kings, the Lord of all nations. Part and parcel is this thought of the universalism of the prophet's teaching,

the fine product of Israel's sojourn in a land not its own.

The going forth of the people from their father's house, from land and birthplace into exile, had thus resulted in a mighty advance of spiritual potency. The palpable proof was here given that God could be worshiped everywhere, that God revealed himself everywhere, that Israel could serve God even beyond the confines of the Temple of Jerusalem and the boundaries of Palestine. What an intimation of a greater future was this, what a forecast of that which was still to be!

The Final Loss of Palestine

Centuries later, in an even greater crisis, that call, "Get thee out of thy land," came again to the people of Israel. Six hundred years and more had elapsed since the first destruction of Jerusalem when the second catastrophe of the same nature befell. During those six centuries it is true, the people had been widely scattered throughout the then civilized world, in Asiatic countries, in African lands, in European provinces, as far west as Spain. But the Temple of Jerusalem was the center of Jewish life; thither all eyes were directed at times of prayer as towards the holiest spot where God dwelt especially. The priesthood that served in that Temple served for all Israel, the sacrifices offered in that Temple were for all Israel. Israel, far flung over the earth, sent its contributions for the upkeep of Temple, priesthood and sacrificial system.

When the dire blow fell, and the sacred edifice be-

came a prey to the devouring flames, when the Romans finally conquered the Holy City and took the Jewish people captive, it seemed to many that the end of all things had come.

Was it the voice of God which now again sounded the command to leave land and birthplace and father's house to go out into a larger world to become a blessing? Again, as more than six centuries before, this seemed not possible. Few were they who could see God's larger purposes unfolding in this terrible crisis. But here and there great teachers saw the silver lining in the black cloud. The leading rabbi of the time, a mighty spirit, Rabbi Jochanan ben Zakkai, comforted his weeping pupils and colleagues as they bewailed the loss of Temple, and altar, and sacrifice with the well-known words that one altar in Israel was not destroyed—the performance of good deeds; and he bade them go forth into their various spheres of activity and *serve*. Again the great idea of service. The words of the rabbi to his pupils were applicable to the large life of the whole people.

The Universalism of Israel's Mission

Israel was to begin its career of service and travail as the servant of the Lord in all the world. Even to a greater degree than in Babylon, after the first destruction, was the idea of universalism to be stressed. The service of the hereditary priesthood at the altar had come to a close. Of course, the hope was constant that this service had been only suspended and would be re-established when, some day, the Temple would be rebuilt and the sacrifices again brought.

But, for all practical purposes, the priesthood idea was transferred to the whole people. The rabbi, the teacher, who might issue from any home or family in Israel—truly representative of the democratic idea of the service of the whole people—took, as the religious leader, the place of the priest, the representative of a hereditary religious aristocracy. Thus only in another way, because of changed circumstances, was the great thought of Isaiah of Babylon, that the people of Israel was the servant of the Lord, being worked out. It is also reported that a great spirit of those days declared that on the day that the Temple of Jerusalem was destroyed the Messiah was born.

Israel In the World

In other words, when Temple and land and birthplace were lost, the Messianic mission of Israel among the peoples of the world commenced. As Abraham's greater work began when he left his land and birthplace, as the larger significance of Israel's work become emphasized by the sojourn in Babylon upon leaving land and birthplace after the first destruction, so was it accentuated even more strongly after the passing of this greatest crisis in its life. Dark was the outlook; it did, indeed, seem to that generation that the glory had departed altogether from Israel. And yet, as we now see after the event, this was but a further step in the progress of Israel's Messianic service. The Temple of Jerusalem was lost but shrines unto the living God of Israel arose everywhere in the civilized world during the succeeding

centuries, since Israel penetrated everywhere. The priesthood of a single family gave way to the idea of the priesthood of a whole people in reality, if not in name. True there was little conscious recognition of these revolutionary tendencies until a much later day, but they were being worked out none the less in actual life and experience. God was being worshipped everywhere in reality by Israel, the Temple of Jerusalem was only a memory; the rabbis springing from any family were the interpreters of the religion, the priesthood's service was only a memory. So unconsciously, perhaps, but none the less surely, the conceptions of the universalism of God's presence everywhere, and the universalism of Israel's service everywhere, became deeply imbedded as century after century passed, and Israel assumed the character of an international, a universal religious community.

All this was preparing for the coming of a day when there would be proclaimed again the mighty preachments of the prophet of the captivity and the universal interpretation of Israel's work in the world would be held forth, of Israel's Messianic service as a priest people, dispersed and scattered everywhere, not as a curse for the sins of the fathers, but to realize the purposes of God in sending the people forth from land and home and birthplace, that, through it, the families of the earth should be blessed. This was little apparent in the medieval European lands, where Israel dwelt in ghettos and wore the badges of shameful discrimination, when whole communities were mobbed and plundered, tortured and exiled.

In Zangwill's expressive phrase, the lands of Europe were step-fatherlands to the Jew. The ghetto became Israel's birthplace and home. What wonder that, under such circumstances, the universalistic phase of this people's purpose was little recognized!

The New Era

But this darkness was only the precursor of a brilliant dawn. God's spirit was working mightily in the world and, when the measure of the days was full, the new day broke at the close of the eighteenth century. Then again sounded the command to Israel: "Get thee out of thy land and birthplace and home," out of the abodes of oppression in all lands, out of the ghettos that have been thy birthplace and thy home, get thee out of these into the abodes which I shall show thee, the abodes of freedom and opportunity, in America and other lands of freedom where the new light is beginning to shine. Again was there a crisis in the history of Israel more significant than any that had gone before. In those new abodes of freedom the universal ideas and ideals which had lain dormant in the evil days of oppression were to take on new and larger life. Isaiah of Babylon and all similar spirits were to live again, for the beginning of the end of the great captivity had come, the captivity of ghetto and disability. That prophet was again speaking, and the people were heeding: "Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the days of old; behold I do a new thing: now shall it spring forth, shall ye not know it?"

Israel, the International People

Indeed, a new thing was occurring, a revolutionary turn was being taken in the life of the age-old international people of Israel; and the particular new thing was that this internationalism was to be demonstrated and emphasized as never before. Israel among the nations in medieval days, until the dawn of the new era of freedom, had been unrecognized as having any rights. Israel among the nations in the newer day was to stand forth as a component element of the nations, into whose fellowship the individual members of the house of Israel were to be received in the full dignity of citizenship. Jews in religion—Americans, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, as the case might be, in nationality—became the motto describing the status of the international people of Israel among the nations of the world. This was the new birth of the new time for the children of Israel. It was a new reading of the idea and ideal of universalism.

True, Philo of Alexandria had written, eighteen hundred years previously, concerning his co-religionists: "The Jews consider the Holy City as the metropolis because the Temple of the highest God is there, but they look upon the land where their fathers lived as their fatherland, having been born and reared there." However, these words of the great Jewish neo-Platonic philosopher became a dead letter during the centuries of Christian persecution of the Jews owing to their servile position in the states of Europe. The Jews were the international religious

people in potentiality only, not in actuality. They were international in fact, for they lived among all the nations; but they had no participation in the national life. It was an anomalous condition. Beneath the surface it bore the promise and potency of great things, but few, if any, who lived in those terrible days of repression and disability could have recognized the possibilities that a brighter and better day would develop into undreamed-of actualities. The material for the real universal internationalism was all there. It required only the spark of the divine fire of freedom to set that material aflame and cause it to burst forth in the eyes of all the world into a great new thing, comparable with, aye, superior to, the glorious event that the ancient prophet had designated by this name. Once again Israel was heeding the divine call to get itself forth into the world and to live a new life among the nations of the world. Once again the Lord was doing wondrous things even as in the days of old. The bonds of the oppressor were broken, the days of the exile had come to a close, the Messiah, the spirit of a new age, was coming; and Israel, now no longer a passive sufferer in the ghettos of the old world of bondage and ill-usage, but an active participant in the glorous life of the new world of light and freedom, went forth to serve everywhere in the ranks of justice and right, of brotherhood and humanity, the messenger of the glad tidings of the universal fatherhood of God unto those who could really appreciate the significance of the marvelous events that the new time had brought to pass.

Universalism in the Nineteenth Century

It is not necessary to rehearse the special phenomena that exemplified the ushering in of the new life of the Jews and emphasized their status as the international people among the nations of all of which separate members of this people formed a part. State after state in Western Europe, to say nothing of our own blessed land, granted them the full rights of citizenship with the passing of the years of the nineteenth century. Within Israel itself arose the Reform movement, which interpreted the new life in the terms of the universalism of the ancient prophets, notably Isaiah of Babylon. In burning word and eloquent preachment modern prophets in Israel, Wise and Einhorn, Geiger and Holdheim, Lilienthal and Samuel Hirsch, dwelt upon the mission of this people as אתם עדי witnesses of God everywhere, as the priest people that was set free in these latter days to serve God everywhere, as the international religious community which was to furnish the palpable proof that stronger and loftier than all artificial nationalisms that are of man's devising are the universal bonds that are of God's making. Israel was thus, in all truth a symbol of what seemed to be the great overpowering fact in mankind's life in that nineteenth century. Great scientific discoveries, remarkable inventions that brought the most distant parts of the earth into close touch with one another, treaties of peace and arbitration among the nations—all seemed to give point to the growing dominance of the idea of universalism whereof Israel's status as an international religious

community was the outstanding symbol for us who move particularly within this circle of life and thought. It appeared as though this was the dawn of that brilliant day prophesied of old when the nations were to flock together to the house of the universal God, when swords were to be beaten into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks and nations were not to learn war any more.

The Reaction.

But the time was not yet ripe. Signs of evil began appearing on the horizon. Dark spots began showing on the sun of universalism. Israel, as so often before, was the barometer that showed that all was not yet fair weather. Anti-Semitism in Germany, the terrible pogroms in Russia, the unspeakable persecutions in Roumania, gave evidence that the universalism, which Israel's place in the world as the international people signified, was not yet strong enough to exorcise the obsession of narrow nationalism that breeds hatreds and prejudices as universalism begets amities and friendships. For thirty years the apostles of such nationalism spewed forth their poisonous doctrines. The infection grew by what it fed on; class hatreds, national hatreds, racial hatreds—all these were stirred up until, finally, the frightful conflagration that is consuming the Old World burst forth in its terrible intensity. Many see in this the ruin of all the hopes built upon the prophetic visions of universalism and brotherhood. A note of weariness and hopelessness sounds forth in all the lands. Within our narrower sphere the wheel seems to have come

around full circle. Thousands and tens of thousands have thrown up their hands in despair. We protagonists of universalism are being laughed to scorn. Our claim that Israel is ar international religious community is being held up to ridicule.

The New Nationalization.

We are told that Israel can only survive by stressing its separatistic nationalism, that only by drawing ourselves off from our fellow-inhabitants as a separate nationalistic group in the lands in which we live can we perpetuate Jewish life. The religion of Israel is said by these latter-day prophets of nationalism to be only an incident, and that, too, a small incident, say ten per cent. of the general Jewish experience, which they term Hebraism. In a word, because of the madness which has come upon the world, because of anti-Semitism and nationalistic obsessions and hatreds, and Russian and Roumanian anti-Jewish excesses, we are bidden reverse our entire viewpoint of the international universalism of Israel's place among the nations and to accept as the final explanation of Israel's marvelous travail of the ages the excision of the religious internationalism as the supreme factor in the life of this people, and substitute for it, as its reason for being, an excluding and exclusive nationalsim that would make Israel merely like any other small people, like Montenegro, or Albania, or Afghanistan, or Santo Domingo, and not *goy echad baaretz*, a people unique, a people unexampled in its history and its preservation, in its message and its mission. But that we will not do.

The Principles of the Union

We here being a convention of a Union of Congregations base upon the religious significance of Israel's life. Let Jewish nationalists aver that the religious element is only an incident of Jewish experience, say ten per cent., we internationalists, founding our claim on what has been Israel's task in the world from the day that it was bidden to be a kingdom of priests and a holy people, fashioning our interpretation along the line of Israel's geniuses among its prophets, thinkers, sages, rabbis and martyrs, the beginning and the end of whose life and thought was God and God alone, taking our stand on the religious idealistic interpretation of history, whereof we believe Israel presents the most striking symbol, as over against the materialistic interpretation, whereof the present war, the apotheosis of nationalism is the climax, we internationalists I say, despite all the frightfully distressing days through which we are passing, must hold our rudder true, feeling that, as so often before, the darkness which is enveloping the world will be dissipated and the mists disappear before a re-arising sun.

Our Outlook for the Future

Dark was the prospect when the first Temple was destroyed and Israel led captive to Babylon, but from out of that darkness came forth the brilliant light of the truth that God could be worshipped in Babylon, as well as Palestine, and eventually the great teachings of the universalistic prophet who

hailed the coming of the day when God would be acknowledged one everywhere and His name one. Darker still was the outlook for Israel when Palestine was finally lost, and Temple and priesthood went the way of all things earthly; for eighteen centuries that darkness, more or less thick, brooded over Israel in all the earth, with only occasional gleams of brightness here and there, now in Babylon, now in Spain, but during that long period of darkness the plans of God, in whose sight a thousand years are only as the yesterday which is past, were unfolding and, in what we call the opening of the modern era, the glorious light again broke forth, and Israel went forth the bearer of the universalism of God's truth among all the nations, at home everywhere in God's earth where freedom, the new Messiah, had prepared the way and taken the stumbling blocks out of the path of the people. And today, when over many nations has settled a darkness thicker possibly than ever before, when over Israel as part and parcel of the nations the darkness is hanging, denser possibly in some ways than over any others, we will lift our eyes with faith and hope that help cometh from the Lord. The same God who bade Abraham go forth and be a blessing, the same God who revealed Himself through Israel as the universal God and Father of mankind, the same God who dispersed our fathers throughout the world to be a blessing unto the nations and has preserved us to this day as a people not like other peoples of the earth, but distinct, peculiar in that His word is the lamp to our feet and the light to our path, that same God in the same voice

of bidding that has sounded so constantly unto Israel throughout the ages urges us of this latest day and generation to get ourselves out of our narrow confines of doubt and despair, out into the wide regions of faith that all will be well; that voice bids us as universal messengers of a universal God to sound the universal note of Israel's true place among the nations לברית עם לאור גוים as God's covenant people, missioned by Him to be the light of the nations. Amen!

THE DEBT AND DUTY OF THE JEWS TO THE UNITED STATES

(April, 1918.)

WE are so habituated to the thought of full equality in this blessed land that it is difficult for us to imagine that there was a time when this was not the case. And yet so it was. Before the American Revolution had been brought to a successful issue and the Constitution of the United States had been ratified by the various colonies, each one of the thirteen original states was governed by its own constitution. Various articles in these constitutions indicated clearly that liberty in the large and full sense as we know it today was not yet achieved. Although Jews lived in the various colonies at ease and were permitted to worship without molestation, still certain disabilities rested upon them and upon all others who were not confessing orthodox Christians. In truth, in some instances, like disabilities rested upon all Christians who were not Protestants, namely communicants of the Catholic church. This appears clearly from paragraphs in the constitution of the various colonies. Thus the constitution of Delaware of 1776, (Art. 22) ordains that the following declaration be made on taking office:

"I do profess faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ his only son, and in the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for evermore, and I do acknowledge the holy

scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration;"[1]

and the constitution of New Jersey of 1776 (Art. 19) declared that,

"No Protestant inhabitant of this colony shall be denied the enjoyment of any civil right merely on account of his religious principles, but that all persons professing a belief in the faith of any Protestant sect . . . shall be capable of being elected into any office of profit and trust. . . . ."[2]

Naturally, when the Constitution of the United States was ratified by the states, every religious disability fell away from the citizens of the country as far as the Federal Government was concerned, for the first amendment to the Constitution declared that "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Thus at a stroke full religious liberty was accorded every citizen of the new republic no matter what his creed or opinion. To my mind this is the greatest achievement of the founders of this government. This was a new thing in the world. True, toleration had been spoken of by advanced European writers and thinkers during that last half of the eighteenth century but such a possibility as full and equal rights for all men irrespective of anything else but the fact that they were men had been achieved nowhere. Every European state had an

[1] Philipson. "Judaism and the Modern State" in Judaism at the World's Parliament of Religious 265 (Cincinnati 1894.)

[2] Ibid 266.

established church, in England it was the Episcopal Church, in some German states the Lutheran, in others the Catholic, in France, Italy, Austria and Spain the Roman Catholic, in Russia the Greek Catholic and so on. All other denominations were merely tolerated.

It remained for this new experiment in government on these western shores to break with all precedent and to proceed on a new and untried path. Here there was to be no established church favored above other churches, no union of church and state, no dominant religion whose followers were to have a monopoly of the offices of the state to the exclusion of others. Religion which in European lands had been the most fruitful cause of persecution, bigotry and oppression because it was an affair of the state, was in this land declared to be altogether a matter of the private conscience of the individual with which Congress was not to interfere and in the free exercise of which no individual was to be hampered. There can be no doubt that religious liberty is the brightest jewel in the diadem that decks Columbia's brow. From the year 1789 when the Constitution was formally and definitely adopted there has been no backward step in this regard taken by the government of the United States although time and again religious bigots have attempted to bring about in some one or other regard a union of church and state. This right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness which fell to the lot of the Jew in this country is an eternal debt which he owes to this great land. From a homeless alien which he had been in all the countries of

Europe he was transformed in this country to a free citizen on an equality with all men of all other faiths. He had been the most conspicuous example of religious disability. He had been storm center of religious animosity in the Christian states for fifteen centuries. He had been driven from pillar to post, here, there and everywhere. At last the hour of freedom had struck for him. America became his land of heart's desire, his haven of hope, his true home, his fatherland. This is what the framers of the Constitution did for that wanderer of the ages when they penned the sublime words "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

In the course of time those of the original thirteen states which had discriminatory provisions in their constitutions amended them so as to make them at one with the spirit and the letter of the Federal Constitution. As long as such provisions continued to exist naturally Jews and in some cases Catholics and in all cases free thinkers could not hold state offices in such commonwealths. Despite the intent and purpose of the founders of the republic several states were very backward in removing from their statutes the last vestige of mediaeval Christian bigotry. In Maryland, the fight over the so-called Jew Bill was waged for eight years and it was not till 1826 that this bill was passed. The state Constitution which had been adopted in 1778 contained the provision that:

"No other test or qualification ought to be required, on admission to any office of trust or profit, than such oath of support and fidelity to this state and such oath

of office as shall be directed by this convention or the legislature of this state and a declaration of belief in the Christian religion."[3]

In consequence of the enactment of the Jew Bill into law this provision was amended in the new constitution adopted in 1851 by the addition of the clause:

"And if the party shall profess to be a Jew, the declaration shall be of his belief in a future state of rewards and punishments."

The last sign of anti-Jewish discrimination in the statutes of the original thirteen states existed in the state of North Carolina whose constitution adopted in 1776 had declared that

"No person who shall deny the being of God or the truth of the Protestant religion or the divine authority either of the Old or New Testaments . . . shall be capable of holding any office or place of trust or profit in the civil department within this state."[4]

This did not finally disappear till 1868 when the constitution provided the following oath of office:

"I, ————, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and maintain the constitution and laws of the United States and the constitution and laws of North Carolina not inconsistent therewith, and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of my office, so help me God;" and section five of the same article declares that only such shall be disqualified for office who "shall deny the existence of Almighty God."[5]

[3] Ibid 264.
[4] Ibid 265.
[5] Ibid 267.

As a matter of course, the states admitted into the Union after the establishment of the government of the United States could not write into their state constitutions any provision at variance with the federal constitution. Such states, as consitutent parts of a government which is founded on the rock of religious liberty had perforce to be guided by the same principles. The thirty-five state commonwealths incorporated from time to time in the great union of states, welcome all alike, of whatever creed, race or condition, so long as they demean themselves as good citizens. The melting pot of America has absorbed millions and in the process of absorption these millions have sloughed old world traditions and emerged citizens of a new world, glorified by the light of freedom. This is America's marvellous achievement, the new birth of a new soil. Incalculable is the debt of these millions to free America, and upon none is the debt more binding than upon the Jews of America whether now it be those of us whose fathers came hither decades ago to escape the disabilities which rested upon them in small German kingdoms and principalities or whether it be the immigrants of recent years who fled hither to escape the hellish treatment meted out to them in Russia and Roumania. That this debt is cheerfully acknowledged by the vast majority appears abundantly but that on the other hand there are now some upon whom the debt sits lightly is only too sadly true as shall appear in the sequel.

But it is not only within the confines of this land itself that the great debt of the Jew to America has lain. Time and again this government as the spokes-

man of humanity and liberty has raised its voice in no uncertain tones in behalf of persecuted Jews in other lands. Although before the great war in which we are now engaged the United States held to its traditional policy of non-interference in the affairs of European states, still when in numbers of instances flagrant injustice was done to Jews, its highest officials brought the moral influence of this humane people to bear in behalf of the persecuted and oppressed. I can attempt to note here only a few of the more celebrated cases. The first instance on record is in connection with the notorious Damascus case in 1840. A monk by the name of Friar Thomas had disappeared. The Franciscan order to which he belonged raised the cry that the Jews had murdered him to use his blood at the Passover feast. The French consul at the instance of this order brought the charge of ritual murder against the Jews. This became a *cause celebre*. Jews were arrested and subjected to all sorts of indignities and tortures. Although no American citizen was involved our Secretary of State, John Forsyth addressed a communication to John Gliddon, United States Consul at Alexandria, Egypt to use his good offices as far as he could, in behalf of these hapless victims of religious hatred and bigotry. The dispatch breathes the finest spirit of humanity. It is the first of its kind on record. It is so exalted in tone and so expressive of what we love to think our country, as the exponent of idealism, represents among the nations, that it may well be quoted in full.

"In common with all civilized nations, the people of the United States have learned with horror, the

atrocious crimes imputed to the Jews of Damascus, and the cruelties of which they have been the victims. The President fully participates in the public feeling, and he cannot refrain from expressing equal surprise and pain, that in this advanced age, such unnatural practices should be ascribed to any portion of the religious world, and such barbarous measures be resorted to, in order to compel the confession of imputed guilt; the offenses with which these unfortunate people are charged, resemble too much those, in less enlightened times, which were made the pretexts of fanatical persecution or mercenary extortion, to permit a doubt that they are equally unfounded.

"The President has witnessed with the most lively satisfaction, the effort of several of the Christian Governments of Europe, to suppress or mitigate these horrors, and he has learned with no common gratification, of their partial success. He is moreover anxious that the active sympathy and generous interposition of the Government of the United States should not be withheld from so benevolent an object, and he has accordingly directed me to instruct you to employ, should the occasion arise, all those good offices and efforts which are compatible with discretion and your official character, to the end that justice and humanity may be extended to these persecuted people, whose cry of distress has reached our shores."[6]

When we recall that there was no provocation for the president of the United States, Mr. Van Buren,

[6] Cyrus Adler, "Jews in Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States" Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society No. 15, pages 4 and 5.

to take any step in this matter as involving rights of American citizens, but that he was actuated only by feelings of sympathy with the victims of unspeakable injustice and cruelty, we can not but be thrilled even at this late date, well nigh eighty years thereafter, by this lofty evidence of the American spirit of humanity and generosity of sentiment.

Roumania and Russia have been names of evil omen for Jews during very many years. The situation of the Jews in Roumania was intolerable when Benjamin F. Peixotto, one of the noblest of our co-religionists, was appointed U. S. Consul to that country by President Grant. Before Peixotto started on his journey the President addressed him in this high strain worthy of all that is finest in the American outlook:

"Respect for human rights is the first duty of those set as rulers over nations, and the humbler, poorer, more abject and more miserable a people be, be they black or white, Jew or Christian, the greater should be the concern of those in authority, to extend protection, to rescue and redeem them and raise them up to equality with the most enlightened. The story of the sufferings of the Hebrews of Roumania profoundly touches every sensibility of our nature. It is one long series of outrage and wrong; and even if there be exaggeration in the accounts which have reached us, enough is evident to prove the imperative duty of all civilized nations extending their moral aid in behalf of a people so unhappy. I trust Prince Charles and his ministers and the public men of that country may be brought to see that the future of their nation lies in a direction totally oppo-

site to those Draconic laws and persecutions, whether great or petty, which have hitherto so invidiously marked its character. It is not by Chinese walls or Spanish expatriations that nations, great or small, can hope to make progress in our day. I have no doubt your presence and influence, together with the efforts of your colleagues of the guaranteeing Powers with whom in this matter you will always be prompt to act, will result in mitigating the evils complained of, and end in terminating them. The United States knowing no distinction between her own citizens on account of religion or nativity, naturally believes in a civilization the world over, which will secure the same universal views."[7]

The treatment of the Jews in Roumania was and is still a scandal. It was the subject of debate during the negotiations which accompanied the signing of the Treaty of Berlin in 1878 after the Russo-Turkish war. The representatives of the Powers there assembled agreed to recognize the independence of Roumania. One of the conditions of such recognition was to be the full emancipation of the Jews of that land and the bestowal of all rights upon them. The United States as a matter of course took no part in the deliberations for the questions involved were European. But John A. Kasson who was U. S. Minister to Austria at that time took it upon himself to address a note to our Secretary of State, Mr. Evarts. In this note he used this noble language, permeated with the true American spirit. He wrote:

[7] Kohler and Wolf. "Jewish Disabilities in the Balkan States" Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society No. 24, p. 12 and 13.

"It would be to the honor of the United States Government if it could initiate a plan by which at once the condition of American Hebrews resident or traveling in Roumania, and the condition of natives of the same race, could be ameliorated and their equality before the law at least partially assured.

The European Congress is about to assemble, and will be asked to recognize the independence of Roumania. Would there be any just objection to the United States Government offering on its part, if the European powers would on their part, make the same condition, to recognize the independence of that country, and to enter into treaty stipulations with its government, only upon the fundamental preliminary agreements:

1. That all citizens or subjects of any such foreign nationality shall, irrespective of race or religious belief, be entitled to equal rights and protection under the treaty and under their laws.

2. That all subjects or citizens under the jurisdiction of the Roumanian Government shall, irrespective of their race or religious belief, have equal rights of trade and commerce with the citizens or subjects of the foreign governments making such treaty; equal rights in the purchase, consumption, barter, or sale of the products of such foreign country, and in sales of Roumanian products to such aliens; equal rights to make contracts with the citizens or subjects of such foreign government, and to be equally protected by the laws in the exercise of the rights so secured?

To this extent, at least, it seems foreign governments would be justified by international law and the

law of self-interest; while they would at the same time give effect to the humane instinct of all truly civilized and Christian nations. The persecuting and oppressive spirit is so strong in Roumania against the Jews that it requires united action by liberal and constitutional governments, as well as an appeal to the strongest desires of the Roumanian people, which are just now to be permitted to enter the family of nations, to bring relief and emancipation to this proscribed race.

Your own judgment will improve, doubtless, the form of action above suggested; but it will be sufficient I hope, to attract your attention to a question, the favorable solution of which would greatly gratify the American people, and evoke especial gratitude from that race which has found in the United States absolute legal equality and security, and the occasion of the congress is most favorable for giving it effect, if approved."[8]

The State Department answered this letter in the same spirit which prompted the writer and assured Mr. Kasson "that the subject is one eminently fitting of consideration which it will receive." Bayard Taylor, the eminent author, was U. S. Minister to Berlin at the time; after the Treaty of Berlin had been signed, he reported to the State Department concerning this treaty as follows:

"The chief interest which the Government and people of the United States have in the treaty is its enforcement of religious liberty in Roumania, Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia. This is the only point

[8] Ibid pages 41 and 42.

which I felt at liberty to present unofficially to several members of the Congress, and I am glad to report that it was opposed by none of the statesmen present."[9]

The notorious disregard by Roumania of this provision by which her independence was conditioned made the portion of the Jews in Roumania intolerable. They were constantly subjected to persecution and oppression. Many sought these shores. This condition brought the matter within the scope of American statesmanship for there was then a direct connection between the Roumanian persecution of the Jews and their coming to the United States. Basing upon this, John Hay, Secretary of State under the first Roosevelt administration, penned his famous Roumanian note, one of the loftiest state papers in American history. Mr. Hay, moved by a noble but contained indignation, expressed the American position as follows:

"The teachings of history and the experience of our own nation show that the Jews possess in a high degree the mental and moral qualifications of conscientious citizenhood. No class of immigrants is more welcome to our shores when coming equipped in mind and body for entrance upon the struggle for bread and inspired with the high purpose to give the best service of heart and brain to the land they adopt of their own free will; but when they come as outcasts, made doubly paupers by physical and moral oppression in their native land and thrown upon the long-suffering generosity of a more favored community, their migration lacks the essential conditions which make alien immigration either acceptable or bene-

[9] Ibid 42.

ficial. So well is this appreciated on the Continent that even in the countries where anti-Semitism has no foothold it is difficult for these fleeing Jews to obtain any lodgment. America is their only goal.

"The United States offers asylum to the oppressed of all lands, but its sympathy with them in no wise impairs its just liberty and right to weigh the acts of the oppressor in the light of their effects upon this country and to judge accordingly.

"Putting together the facts now plainly brought home to this Government during the past few years, that many of the inhabitants of Roumania are being forced by artificially adverse discrimination to quit their native country, that the hospitable asylum offered by this country is almost the only refuge left to them, that they come hither unfitted by the conditions of their exile to take part in the new life of this land under circumstances either profitable to themselves or beneficial to the community, and that they are objects of charity from the outset and for a long time, the right of remonstrance against the acts of the Roumanian Government is clearly established in favor of this Government. Whether consciously and of purpose or not, these helpless people, burdened and spurned by their native land, are forced by the sovereign power of Roumania upon the charity of the United States. This Government cannot be a tacit party to such an international wrong. It is constrained to protest against the treatment to which the Jews of Roumania are subject, not alone because it has unimpeachable ground to remonstrate against the resultant injury to itself,

but in the name of humanity. The United States may not authoritatively appeal to the stipulations of the Treaty of Berlin, to which it was not and cannot become a signatory, but it does earnestly appeal to the principles consigned therein because they are the principles of international law and eternal justice, advocating the broad toleration which that solemn compact enjoins and standing ready to lend its moral support to the fulfillment thereof by its cosignatories, for the act of Roumania itself has effectively joined the United States to them as an interested party in this regard."[10]

This intercession by Secretary Hay adds another item to the debt owed by Jews to America.

The frightful experience of the Jews in Russia beginning with the pogroms of 1881 and continuing up to the very outbreak of the Russian Revolution in 1917 is too new a story to require recapitulation here. Time and again America made her voice heard. It is not necessary to quote words and sentiments. These were in a line with those I have already adduced in the instances I have brought to your notice. The crowning fact however lay in the refusal of the Congress of the United States at the instance of President Taft to renew the commercial treaty with Russia unless the provisions of the treaty of 1832 guaranteeing the rights of American citizens travelling in Russia be observed by that government. The passport question had become very acute. Russia had refused time and again to honor the American passport held by Jews. By a

[10]Ibid, pages 133 and 134.

practically unanimous vote, there being but one vote in the negative, Congress by refusing to renew the treaty set the seal once again upon the American doctrine of the complete equality of all its citizens and expressed the resentment of the American government at the presumption of another government to discriminate against American citizens because of their faith. This action of Congress was in a line with the spirit of the American fathers who established this government upon the basis of full civil and religious liberty.

I have passed in review some of the more striking incidents in the diplomatic history of the United States by which the rights of the Jews as men were championed. In most of the instances the action was purely voluntary, prompted by the highest sentiments of pure humanity and justice. The Jews the world over owe an everlasting debt of gratitude to those fine spirits who penned such golden words in behalf of their persecuted co-religionists. And we Jews in the United States, native and naturalized, having here our blessed home land would be monsters of unappreciation and ingratitude did we not recognize to the full the tremendous service which our country has rendered in the cause of freedom as illustrated particularly by the change in the Jews' status. For the most part the debt is recognized fully and gratefully. And the debt implies a duty.

What that duty is lies almost upon the surface. In a phrase the duty may be defined as wholehearted appreciation of the blessings and benefits of freedom as achieved in this land and wholehearted loyalty to this government at any and all times. That

in the vast majority of instances the American Jews are thus appreciative and loyal has been proved time and again. In every crisis they have done their full share towards safeguarding the institutions of this their homeland. In every war that the country has engaged in they have fought side by side with their fellow citizens of all faiths. During the Civil War when the very existence of the Union was at stake they rallied to the colors in full loyalty; in truth it has been abundantly shown that in proportion to the number of Jews in the country at the time there were more of them in the army than of any other religious denomination. It is not my purpose to exalt the patriotism of the Jew, for in being patriotic and loyal he is simply discharging his plain duty as a citizen and paying the debt which he particularly owes for the liberty which is his here. And in the great crisis through which the country is now passing the American Jews like all other true Americans are rising to the occasion. In every patriotic service that the citizens of the country have been called upon to fulfill they have been found working shoulder to shoulder with all their fellow citizens. Our young men are serving in large numbers in the camps and cantonments through the country and a full proportion is across the seas somewhere in France. The Liberty Loan, the Red Cross, the War Savings and other campaigns have found the men and women of the Jewish faith among the most willing and efficient workers. Whatever branch of the government service has called them they have answered with ready response. It is all a matter of plain duty.

If however, during the months that have elapsed since we have cast the die and have enrolled ourselves in the ranks of the fighters for the world's freedom and democracy, it has happened here and there that misguided individuals who chance to be Jews have given voice to disloyal sentiments and it must be regretfully admitted that there have been such, let it be said and known that such individuals are acting merely as individuals; their disloyal words and acts are repudiated by the great mass of their co-religionists. For this great mass the United States is the land of their love and their affection. We who have been born here know no other home and those thousands and tens of thousands who coming from lands of oppression have found here a haven of refuge and a home are surely no less loyal than the native born, unless all sense of appreciation be dead and I am sure it is not dead. America, blessed America has received from them and will receive from them ungrudgingly loyal support in return for all that she has given them, the opportunity to live a life of freedom and to develop their powers without let or hindrance. In our devotion to these United States, our home, we are at one with all our fellow citizens, we forget all differences of creed, race, color or previous condition, when our country calls. America now stands forth as the hope of the world in this supreme struggle of the forces of freedom and democracy against the hosts of militarism and autocracy. The struggle will demand untold sacrifices on the part of all of us. Can we whose fathers came to these Pactolian shores to escape the disabilities that rested upon them in the

lands of their birth hesititate for one moment to do all we can to uphold the hands of our great President and all others in authority in the stupendous tasks they are directing? No, we can not hesitate and we will not. The duty is clear as the debt is unquestioned. It is a wondrous privilege to help in such a cause. America has engaged in many a great enterprise but in none that sheds such lustre upon her name. Without thought of gain or advantage, without idea of exploitation or profit she has thrown herself with all her vast resources into this struggle not only to make the world safe for democracy but to make democracy safe for the world. Not as tolerated clients but as full and equal sharers in the duties as well as the privileges, we American Jews shall give and freely give of all we have and hold to meet every demand which the country makes upon its devoted children. We, the spiritual descendents of the prophets of Israel should in a fuller measure than any others have ears attuned to the high measure of justice and opportunity for all which this our land is now championing. The great spokesman of that message, our leader and our president was moved by the spirit of those ancient prophets when he closed that great state paper, his recent message to Congress with the high and impressive words, "A supreme moment of history has come. The eyes of the people have been opened and they see. The hand of God is laid upon the nations. He will show them favor, I truly believe only if they rise to the clear heights of his own justice and mercy."

AMERICA'S ENTRANCE INTO THE WAR*

WE are assembled tonight as American citizens in this striking demonstration of loyalty to American ideals and devotion to American principles. The great throngs have hurried hither, impelled by one thought and one motive, that of lofty patriotism. From the heights and from the valley, from the east and from the west, the north and the south of our beloved city, have the thousands streamed to this historic hall, the scene of so many inspiring gatherings, but none more inspiring than this, which finds us as one in this time of crisis.

In the high union of this hour, all differences of creed, race and color are brushed aside; here we are Americans, merging the differences that so frequently divide us in the resemblances that unite us. Yes, whatever be our separate beliefs, and whatever be the churches we attend, we remember only one thing now, and that is that we are all one as the children of God—all one as citizens of this great republic—our country and our home.

To my mind, one of the greatest achievements of the founders of the Republic, if not the greatest, was the adoption of that article of the constitution of the United States which assures religious liberty and freedom of conscience to all the inhabitants of the land. That article reads: 'Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.' This was a new departure in the history of the world. It

*Address delivered at patriotic mass meeting, Music Hall, Cincinnati, April 5, 1917.

was thus solemnly covenanted at the very foundation of our government that there was to be complete separation of church and state, no state church, no established religion; here in this free land Christian and Jew, Protestant and Catholic, were to be privileged to worship as they would, without let or hindrance.

This was nobly interpreted by Washington when he wrote those golden words 'Happily the Government of the United States, which give to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens in giving it all all times their effectual support.' Religion which should be the greatest binding force among men, as its name implies, has been on the contrary so requently in the history of the world the cause of dissension and division, of bigotry and fanaticism, of persecution and oppression. The policy of this free government has made these dreadful things impossible and in the place thereof we find such a scene as this when in the high unity of American citizenship and American liberty, we religious leaders of all sorts and conditions, be we now priest or pastor, or rabbi, join with our fellow citizens of our own and all other denominations to register our fealty to our government and its constituted authorities. When it is a matter of fundamentals, it would appear that all true men are brothers, whatever be the differences of thought, belief, condition or station which ordinarily divide them. And friends, and brethren, it is the fundamentals that we are facing now, you and I; that which is

fundamental at this time of crisis is the honor and dignity of our land and our people.

Though you be Christian and I be Jew, though some have come from England and some from Italy, though others hail from Germany and still others from Russia, though thousands were born abroad and other thousands were born on this soil, still here we forget the religious and racial differences—here we are neither Englishmen nor Italians, neither Germans nor Russians—here we are all Americans, children of the great republic whose name stirs us as with a trumpet sound, and whose high ideals of liberty we hold aloft as our choicest possession!

But I have heard it said the country is on the brink of war, and should not the collective voice of the churches, which we ministers represent, be for peace? The country has wanted war as little as have the churches. The President has wanted war as little as my brethren, leaders in the respective churches, as little as I. We know the horrors of war. We know the blessings of peace. But even those of us who have preached peace and arbitration all our lives know that there is a difference between peace and peace. This is a time when men cry peace, but there is no peace! When the safety of my home is imperiled, when the honor of my family is endangered, I may be forced to use measures to protect that safety and safeguard that honor which ordinarily I abhor and detest. So in the larger sense the safety of my country and the honor and dignity of my nation may demand that I approve measures forced upon my President and the representatives of my country which in a former day I found repellent.

In that position we find ourselves now. We peace advocates of the churches will not have a peace secured at the cost of national honor. Peace at any price may spell degeneracy. It is not because the President and we who sympathize with him love peace less, but because we love justice, national honor and world peace more, that a halt must be cried to the imperious dictation of Germany's intolerable course toward our country, our people and all the world.

And because we feel this we are here. Not to incite, not to arouse passions, not to stir up hatred, no, not that, but to declare our attitude in this world conflict, in which the free governments of the world—England, France, Italy and Russia, now a free government, too, God be praised! are championing the cause of freedom and democracy over against autocracy and militarism, the curse of Germany, and which will be the curse of the world should Germany triumph.

America, the land of freedom, when the test comes, as it has now come, must range herself with the forces of freedom. Church and synagog, cathedral and temple, have gained advantage beyond words from the freedom which we here enjoy. Therefore we are here united, and from all our pulpits in church and synagog, in cathedral and temple, shall ring out words of high devotion to our nation and of heartfelt prayer for our country like unto that soulful aspiration of the great American poet:

'Our hearts, our hopes are all with thee;
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,
Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,
Are all with thee, are all with thee!'

ARE THE GERMANS THE CHOSEN PEOPLE?*

THE statement has been made frequently of late years that the modern Germans in their claim that they are God's chosen people are the latter day counterpart of the ancient Jews, who are thus termed in the Bible. Preachers and writers in Germany make the direct comparison in unmistakable terms as when one of these preachers declares unreservedly: "As was Israel among the heathen, so is Germany among the nations, the pious heart of Europe," and another asserts no less apodictically: "In a moment we, the children of modern humanity, have become the heir of Israel, the people of the Old Testament. We shall be the bearers of God's promises. the living proof that it is not man who creates history, but God through man." The conviction that they are the chosen people of these latter ages has become a leading article of German belief; it has imbued the German people with a feeling of superiority over all other nations; they have become obsessed with the idea that they are God's favorites; they speak of God as the German God, implying thereby that other peoples are without the pale of His special concern.

It is, however, not only Germans who have instituted the comparison between themselves and ancient Israel in this matter of being God's chosen people but leading speakers and thinkers in other lands,

*Address delivered before the Business Men's Club, Cincinnati, January 28, 1918.

when discussing the state of the modern German mind, are fond of adducing the same comparison. It was only recently that I heard a distinguished American professor say this emphatically and without modification. As I listened to his words the thought presented itself forcibly to my mind that this frequently reiterated statement could and should be subjected to careful examination. For I felt that this comparison was superficial and far from the truth, inasmuch as the term "chosen people" received entirely different interpretation by the leading spirits of ancient Israel, namely the prophets, from that given it by the spokesmen of modern Germany as revealed in the writings and utterances of the foremost framers of opinion in that realm in recent days.

Before addressing myself, however, to the special theme under consideration, attention must be called to the fact that the "chosen people" idea was widespread in ancient days. The Jews were not alone in considering themselves the favorites of their God. Many, if not all, nations of antiquity looked upon themselves in the same light. Thus the neighboring peoples of ancient Israel, Moab and Ammon, considered themselves respectively the chosen of their deities, Chemosh on the one hand and Milcom on the other; the Babylonians held the belief that they were the chosen favorites of Marduk, the chief god in their pantheon; and so with other peoples. Each of these nations considered itself the favorite of its national deity who, according to the popular belief, fought on its side in war, discomfited its enemies, showered it with favors and distinguished it by the

grant of unusual privileges, to the disadvantage of other peoples. There can be no doubt that in early days the Jews shared in this interpretation of what it signified to be God's chosen people. But with the passing of time a different meaning was read into the conception by those soaring spirits, the prophets of Israel, and this interpretation of the idea became paramount in the course of the development of Judaism during the centuries. According to this new evaluation of the term, Israel was chosen not for favors, but for service. The great prophet of the sixth pre-Christian century, known as Isaiah of Babylon, defined the people of Israel by the significant term, "Servant of the Lord." This prophet brings out this thought in a number of famous passages of which I need quote only one. Says the prophet in the name of God, "Behold My servant whom I uphold, Mine elect in whom My soul delighteth. I have put My spirit upon him, he shall make the right go forth among the nations. . . . I the Lord have called thee in righteousness . . . and set thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the nations, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon and them that sit in darkness from the prison house." (Isaiah LXI: 1, 6 and 7.) In this striking passage, as well as in others that might be quoted, the choice is interpreted in terms of service. Israel, the servant of the Lord and upon whom rested the spirit of the Lord, was chosen for responsibilities, not for privileges; was called in righteousness, that is to promulgate the doctrine of the might of right, or as it was put by a brother

prophet, "Not by might and not by strength, but by My spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." And in this light has the conception of the chosen people been taken by the leaders of the synagogue ever since. In the prayers God is thanked for having chosen Israel and for having called him to God's service that through Israel, sanctified by observing God's commandments, His holy name might be known in all the earth. I believe I may state without fear of contradiction that this significance first attached to the "chosen people" idea by the prophet twenty-six hundred years ago, as applied to Israel, is now generally accepted by authoritative thinkers among Jews.

How different the interpretation given the term by the molders of opinion in modern Germany! There is the widest gap between the interpretation in terms of service by the prophets of ancient Israel and the interpretation in terms of power and favoritism by the prophets of modern Germany. We find in this latter a reversion to the old idea of the deity choosing a people for favors, of the deity fighting on the side of the chosen, of the deity giving victory to the arms of the chosen. What is the Nietzschean doctrine of the superman but this belief carried to the nth degree? What are the paeans sung by Houston Stewart Chamberlain and his like on the supremacy of the blond Teutonic race in all things, but a variation of this same belief? What is the boastful claim for the superiority of German Kultur but a harping on the same string? Here is the bald and frequently brutal assertion of the right of might, the motto of the warrior nations of all times, not the teaching of

the might of right, the doctrine of the prophets of Israel, the founder of Christianity and all the highest spirits of humanity.

Lest it appear that these statements are made *ex parte*, I will let loudly acclaimed modern German leaders and prophets speak for themselves. So general and frequent are the boastful assertions of German superiority to all others that it has been found possible to compile whole volumes of excerpts from the writings and speeches of German philosophers, preachers, poets, authors and men of affairs. Within the past year or two such volumes have appeared under titles like "Hallelujah and Hurrah!" "Out of Their Own Mouths," "Speaking of Prussians," "Made in Germany," "Gems of German Thought" and "Kultur and Conquest." For the sake of illustrating my special theme, namely, the setting forth of the contrast between the prophetic Jewish conception of service as the obligation of the chosen people and the modern German conception of force, I will select a few out of the many striking expressions wherewith the writings of Treitzschke, Bernhardi, Chamberlain, Nietzsche, Tannenberg, Lasson, Sombert, *et hoc genus omne*, teem.

The first time that the term chosen people is applied to Israel in the Bible is in the nineteenth chapter of the book of Exodus, introductory to the giving of the Ten Commandments, humanity's magna charta of morality. We there read, "If ye will hearken to My voice indeed and keep My covenant, then ye shall be Mine own treasure from among all peoples, and ye shall be to Me a kingdom

of priests and a holy nation." (Exodus XIX: 5.) In other words, they would be a chosen people if they would keep God's covenant, the Ten Commandments, the great charter which was entrusted to them. Modern Germany's prophet has given us a new version of the Commandments that offers a remarkable contrast to this conception. In the book which is generally considered as containing the ripest flowering of his thought, "Thus Spake Zarathustra," Nietzsche has a chapter entitled "Old and New Tables." The old tables are to be discarded, the new, containing his reading of the moral life, are to take their place. Hear some of this new doctrine.

> "Do you say it is a good cause by which a war is hallowed? I say unto you, it is a good war which hallows every cause. War and courage have done greater things than the love of one's neighbor. . . . Be not considerate of thy neighbor. What thou doest can no one do to thee again. Lo, there is no requital. . . . 'Thou shalt not steal!' 'Thou shalt not kill!' Such precepts were once called holy. Is there not even in all life stealing and killing? And for such precepts to be called holy, was not truth itself slain thereby? . . . . This new table, O my brethren, put I up over you, 'Become hard!"

Here modern Germany's prophet, the creator of the conception of the superman, out of which has grown the thought of the Germans as the super people, gives a new reading not only to the Commandments, but also to that consummate expression of Jesus' teaching, the Golden Rule. Jesus said, "Do unto others as you would have them do to you;" Zarathustra Nietzsche says, "Be not considerate of thy neighbor. What thou doest can no one do to

thee again. Lo, there is no requital." And for the old tables containing such commands as "Thou shalt not kill!" "Thou shalt not steal!" he substitutes his new table, "Become hard!" For him and for his disciples, the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule are outgrown. They were for slaves. One of Nietzsche's favorite terms is "Slave morality," as applied to the moral teachings of Judaism and Christianity. Truly a vast contrast! According to the older prophets, the observance of the Commandments and the implied service to humanity was the prime condition towards becoming the chosen people! According to the newer prophet of Germany this observance made slaves, not a chosen people! For the latter the new commandment, "Become hard," expresses the latest revelation. Fully indeed has this new reading of the commandments been accepted by the military masters of Germany who are directing the destinies of this people and whose diabolical course has brought upon the world the greatest disaster of all the ages through the unspeakable deeds of the German soldiery in the lands which they have overrun! That Nietzsche's teaching has not been permitted to remain mere theory, but has been there translated into inhuman practices, is clearly apparent. How completely this revelation given through Nietzsche has become the rule of action of the military party appears from a soldier's rendering of that teaching. Even more brutally, if that were possible, General Von der Goltz expresses this new rendering of the commandments, when in his "Ten Commandments of the German Soldier" he says:

> "War is not a work of charity and in the soldier's heart there is no compassion. The soldier must be hard. It is better to let a hundred women and children belonging to the enemy die of hunger than to let a single German soldier suffer."

Truly a worthy disciple of the prophet! The soldier! The soldier! he is supreme. One hundred women and children are of no account in comparison with him. Humanity is thrown to the winds.

It is also interesting to note that the philosopher who has exerted such a tremendous influence in shaping the thought of modern Germany and in producing the modern German state of mind has placed a new valuation not only on the Ten Commandments, the supreme teaching of the Old Testament, but also upon the Sermon on the Mount, the outstanding teaching of the New Testament. Hear this new interpretation of one of the famous beatitudes:

> We have heard it said, Blessed are the peace-makers, but I say unto you, Blessed are the war-makers, for they shall be called, if not the children of Jahveh, then the children of Odin, who is greater than Jahveh.

Once again might against right, force against love, war against peace!

Nietzsche has many disciples besides the general just named, who repeated in almost identical words the new commandment for the direction of life, "Become hard." Militarism is the German cult. It is the practical outcome of the notion of the teaching of the will to power and the conquering might of force so constantly urged by Nietzsche. All these things hang together. The might of their militarism is the proof to the Germans that they

are the chosen people. They will impose their will upon all weaker peoples. They will take what they want. Nothing which stands in the way of the accomplishment of desire must be taken into consideration. Treaties are only scraps of paper, Small nations have no rights which must be respected. "Might is the supreme right and the dispute as to what is right is decided by the arbitrament of war," declares Bernhardi. If Belgium obstructs the path, it is Germany's right to invade and steal Belgium, to sack Belgian cities, destroy Belgian seats of learning, burn, outrage, plunder, kill; the right of the strong is the last word; hear it again, "Might is the supreme right." This, the slogan of the latter day chosen people, as "right is the supreme might," was the watchword of the ancient prophet, for Bernhardi has learned well the lessons of Germany's acclaimed historian, Henirich von Treitzschke, the interpreter of the blood and iron theory of history; one of Treitzschke's leading theses is expressed in the phrase, "The small nations have no right of existence and ought to be swallowed up." Carrying out this instruction of the interpreter of history a la German militarism, Bernhardi declares flatly: "The Germans must, regardless of the rights and interests of other peoples, fight their way to predominance and force upon humanity German Kultur and spirit." But I hear it said by apologists that these expressions of Von der Goltz, Bernhardi, and their kind, horrible as they are, are to be expected from soldiers and militarists. Their training had distorted their point of view. War is their business and they look at all things through that glass.

Little as such an apology avails to excuse the inhuman, brutal and savage expressions of militray writers and still more savage deeds of military commanders, still even it loses all force when it becomes clear that men in civil life, men occupying high posts in the professional world, even professors in universities, preachers in churches, authors in literary circles, give voice to similar sentiments. These well nigh incredible things explain the state of mind of the German people. Their professors, their preachers, their writers are teaching, preaching and expounding the same doctrines as the militarists, the doctrine that the Germans are the chosen people, the doctrine of the right of might, the doctrine of German superiority to all the world. These germs have inoculated the German people, they have learned well the lesson dinned into them for the past thirty years and more in school and church. It is all a part of the system. Teachers and professors are dependents of the military state and uphold its doctrines. Preachers are the appointees of the state for the church is a state church. This explains such strange phenomena which startled the world as the declaration issued by ninety-three professors shortly after the beginning of the war in 1914, some of them among the most famed not only in Germany, but in the world, like Harnack, Eucken, Deissmann and others equally distinguished, in which declaration these men defended and vindicated the course of Germany, and that other document of June 30, 1915, touching the status of Belgium, signed by over a thousand professors, clergymen, judges, writers, etc.,

in which it is stated, "We must keep Belgium firmly in our hands as regards political and mllitary matters and as regards economic interests. In no matter is the German nation more united in its opinion; to it the retention of Belgium is an indubitable matter of honor." Such perversion of the right seems scarcely credible. Stolen, outraged Belgium must be retained! That perversion is the direct result of the training the German people had received from its teachers, professors, preachers, writers and journalists under the direction and guidance of its military masters. How direct, how unequivocal that teaching was shall now appear from a few examples selected from a great number that might be adduced.

Let a professor speak. Werner Sombart has come to be well known in this country through his books on the history of commerce and other economic works; his writings have had a great vogue in his native land. He gave utterance in 1915 to the simon pure belief of the German people in its destiny as the chosen people in these modest terms:

> "As the emblem of the Germans the eagle soars high above all the birds of the world, so the German should feel himself raised above all the peoples who surround him and whom he sees at an immeasurable depth below him. Here also it is true that nobility implies obligations. The idea that we are the chosen people imposes upon us very great duties—and only duties. Above all things we must maintain ourselves as a strong nation. We are determined to be and to remain a strong German nation and a strong German state and...if it is necessary to extend our territorial possessions so that the increasing body of the nation shall have room to develop itself, we will take for ourselves as much territory as seems to us necessary. We shall also set our

> foot wherever it seems to us important for strategic reasons in order to preserve our unassailable strength. That is all!"

That is all! Take it or leave it! These words explain the actions of the bully among nations! We will seize by our strong right arm what we need! Here is the new meaning of the chosen people a la Teutonic militarism. Not one word of service as the obligation of the chosen people. Said the ancient Jewish prophet of Israel's duty as the elect of God: "He shall make the right go forth according to the truth:" declares the modern German professor as the supreme duty imposed upon the Germans as the chosen people, "Above all things in the world, we must maintain ourselves as a strong nation. We are determined to be and remain a strong German nation and a strong German state." Look on this picture and on that!

Let the professor speak again, and this time the eminent Biblical scholar whom in the pre-bellum days students everywhere looked up to as speaking with authority in his chosen field, Adolf Deissmann. In an address on War and Religion, this great scholar, who as the apologist for the scandalous acts of the militaristic regime, has shamed his former reputation, used these astounding words:

> "The French Ambassador in London is understood to have said at a banquet that so-called scholars and professors. have preached the religion of barbarism. His words—I venture that paradox—pretty nearly express my thought. What people beyond the channel call barbarism history will some day call primitive strength. In this age which has witnessed the most gigantic mobilization of physical and

> mental forces which the world has ever seen, we certainly proclaim—no, it is not we who proclaim it, but it reveals itself—the religion of power."

We rub our eyes. Have we read correctly? Is it possible that a cultured man of the twentieth century has pronounced such words? This unashamed defense of a shameful position is inexpressibly painful. To such a depth hast thou caused a great mind to fall, O German militarism! This is German Kultur! Yes, we proudly say it, there is a vast gulf between what we call culture and what the German professor dubs Kultur!

What the French Ambassador whom Deissmann quotes refers to is the above mentioned declaration signed by the ninety-three leading professors and scholars, of whom Deissmann was one. Far from repudiating this historic document whereof some day when Germany will come to her senses she will be heartily ashamed, this professor glorifies it. He glories in the shame! Degradation cannot go much further! He speaks of the mobilization of physical and mental forces, but he significantly omits mention of the spiritual forces. Yes, Germany is physically and intellectually powerful, but spiritually, oh, how weak! Once more let me contrast the modern German professor in his definition of the religion of his people as the chosen people with the ancient prophet. Says the modern German professor, "We certainly proclaim the religion of power;" says the ancient Jewish prophet in his further definition of Israel as the servant of the Lord, "A bruised reed he will not break and a dimly burning wick he will not quench,"

and in the same spirit that other great prophet of Jewish birth and training, the founder of Christianity, declared, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

Now that the professors have been heard through their representatives, I would call to the witness chair a representative of writers whose books have gained great popularity. In a recent article entitled "Economic Imperialism," in the Century Magazine for July, 1917, David Jayne Hill, our former Ambassador to Germany, refers to the widespread vogue of a book by Otto Richard Von Tannenberg. The book is named "Grossdeutschland" and appeared in 1911; thousands and thousands of copies were sold. This popular author throws further light upon the subject we are considering when he speaks thus of Germany's mission:

> "A policy of sentiment is folly. Enthusiasm for humanity is idiocy. Charity should begin among one's compatriots. Politics is business. Right and wrong are notions needed in civil life only. The German people is always right, because it is the German people, and because it numbers 87,000,000. Our fathers have left us much to do!" And again: "The period of preparation lasted for a long time (1871-1911)—forty years of toil on land and sea, the end constantly in view. The need now is to begin the battle, to vanquish and to conquer; to gain new territories; lands for colonization for the German peasants, fathers of future warriors and for the future conquests....'Peace' is a detestable word; peace between Germans and Slavs is like a treaty made on paper, between water and fire....Since we have the force, we have not to seek reasons."

If anything, these statements are even more direct and unabashed than the words of the professors.

No equivocation here! What arrogance! "The German people is always right, because it is the German people!" What knock-down arguments! "Since we have the force, we have not to seek reasons!" Always force! always power! Who can doubt that in his brutal frankness this writer expresses the true inwardness of the modern German militaristic mind. For German militarism, peace is a detestable word, unless it be a German peace; the forty years of preparation had as their purpose the exploitation of the weak, the conquest of the unprepared, the rape of neighboring lands. The voice of the war guns thundered at unsuspecting Liege and Namur; the tramp, tramp of the grey German hosts resounded on Belgian roads and in Belgian streets; they struck quickly, they struck violently, because they had the power. Contrast once more the clash of warfare which German militarism let loose in 1914 and which has made the European war zone a hell on earth ever since, with the ancient prophet's characterization of Israel as the chosen people: "He shall not cry, nor lift up nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets." The war cry, the battle din marks the chosen according to the apostle of force, the quiet ministrations of the gentle servant of the Lord is the prophet's delineation.

The list of witnesses would not be complete unless we heard from those who have a particular right to speak when the topic is one which has always had a religious connotation. From earliest times the thought of the chosen people has been connected with the Deity. The choice is made by God. Therefore it is necessary to let be heard the interpreters of religion

as made in modern Germany. These preachers are the mouthpieces of the state church. They uphold the state in all its enterprises. That they believe what they preach I have not the least doubt. That their congregations also believe it there can be no question. This too largely contributes to what I termed above the German state of mind. This German state of mind is the most serious feature of the whole terrible situation. This is what the Allies are really fighting against. Until this state of mind is changed, German militarism will remain intrenched. Every agency has been employed by the war lords who occupy Germany's seats of the mighty to produce this state of mind and admirably have they succeeded, for they have enlisted as their missionaries not only the school and the press, but also the church. In a war sermon delivered in 1915, the Rev. Walter Lehmann asked his hearers:

> "Am I exaggerating when I say that we feel at the present time, when lying, passion, selfishness prevail around us, that we are actually the people God has chosen for his heirs, feel ourselves in this fight, if not the chosen people—yet, in all humility—the instrument of God? This the secret strong well-spring of the national movement is a kind of German piety. The German God has become living."

And expatiating further on this idea of the German God, he says in another place:

> "We have God on our side. Can the Russians, the French, the Serbians, the English say this? No, not one of them. Only we Germans can say it. If God is for us, who can be against us? It is enough for us to be a part of God....A nation which is God's seed corn for the future....Germany is the center of God's plan for the world....God and Germany belong to each other."

As one reads these and similar utterances by German preachers, one must fain ask himself, has the world gone backward thousands of years? Hebrew prophets, Christian apostles, men of light and leading among all nations in all parts of the world have taught for centuries that God is the Father of all mankind. Here all this is thrown overboard, the crudest nationalistic doctrine about God is preached. A German God, what a limitation of the Lord of all the universe! True, in ancient Israel, God was first regarded as the God of Israel only, but that was thousands of years ago; later in Israel the prophets arose, who conceived God as the God of all the earth, the Father of all men. Such, too, was the teaching of the founder of Christianity, and such surely has been the preachment in all places in this western world for many years. And now this reversion in Germany. The German God! Not the God of all the nations.

But Lehmann stands not alone in his frenzied exaltation of the German people as the chosen people and as the especial favorites of the German God. A brother preacher, creature also of the state church, bound to uphold the militaristic system and policy, the Rev. J. Rump, waxes enthusiastic on the subject of German glory in this strain: "It has long been an honor and a joy, a source of renown to be a German—the year 1914 has made it a title of nobility. What Geibel once prophesied in the distich[1] so often quoted, now can and shall and must at last become a reality

[1] *Und es mag am deutschem Wesen, Einmal noch die Welt genesen.*

in the life of nations that by the German nature, that nature blessed by the grace and hallowed by the spirit of God, shall the whole world be healed." And this after the rape of Belgium! This after the indescribable outrages in France! What word but blasphemy can fitly describe such an utterance from a spot called holy? And what shall be said of the outburst of Pastor D. Baumgarten, another of these preacher panegyrists of the murderers of the innocent, the militarists of Germany, a man who debased the pulpit by singing the praises of the assassins of the deep in these startling words:

> "Any one who cannot bring himself to approve from the bottom of his heart the sinking of the Lusitania...and give himself up to honest joy at this victorious exploit of German defensive power—such a one we deem no true German."

But enough! enough! To depths of infamy indeed has a church sunk, accredited representatives of which can thus glorify murder. Such an utterance, coupled with the official governmental act of striking Lusitania medals, are to us indeed incomprehensible. To this pass has militarism brought this people. Madness possesses these Germans. Or else they would not dare pride themselves on being the chosen people. Chosen people! Nay, nay. In spite of all their achievements in science, industry, manufacture, mental research and intellectual investigation, they are barbarians. Their greatest man, Goethe, had a truer insight into the German nature than have the ecclesiastical and professional panegyrists whose words we have heard. Well nigh one hundred years ago

Goethe, in one of his conversations with Eckermann, said:

> "The Germans are of yesterday. No doubt in the last one hundred years we have been cultivating ourselves quite diligently, but it may take a few centuries more before our countrymen have absorbed sufficient intellect and higher culture for it to be said of them that it is a long time since they were barbarians."

It is almost a century since Goethe thus expressed himself; he claimed that a few centuries would have to pass before the Germans would have definitely left barbarism behind them. They have not yet done so. Scratch the German militarist and you find the barbarian. A chosen people! No, no; rather a barbarous people! Goethe, we thank thee for that correct diagnosis.

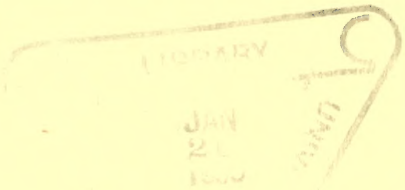
And now just one testimonial more. The all-highest, the supreme war lord, the head and front of the offending which has plunged a world into deepest woe, even the Kaiser, who in view of the horrors which have resulted from his act in precipitating the war, has been well termed the greatest criminal of the ages, gave classical expression to the doctrine we have been considering, when in his proclamation to the army of the east in 1914 he adjured his warriors thus:

> "Remember that you are the chosen people! The spirit of the Lord has descended upon me because I am the Emperor of the Germans. I am the instrument of the Almighty. I am his sword, I am his agent. War and death to all those who shall oppose my will. War and death to those who oppose my mission. Let them perish, all the enemies of the German people. God demands their destruction, God who by my mouth bids you to do his will!"

And this in the twentieth Christian century! We shudder at this blasphemy! It is doubtful whether any more frightful word fell from the lips of even the most barbarous monarchs of the twentieth pre-Christian century. And this man believes himself to be the divinely appointed ruler of the German people, and the German people assents! Such is his conception of the chosen people! Such the conception of all his myrmidons in the army, the university, the church, the public prints. No word here of service for humanity—only German expansion, German exaltation, German glory! Power, power, power! Might, Might, might!

This is the kernel of the situation with which the world is confronted. As long as a nation believes as does the German people that it was chosen to impose its will upon the world and to become the world's master by force, so long is the world in danger. To combat this danger, America entered the war. The President of the United States in one of his remarkable addresses to Congress stigmatized this German militarism by the term "Thing," as though it were a monster incapable of other designation. And such indeed it is. He declared that this thing must be removed from the face of the earth. To help to so remove it is America's purpose. To my mind the day on which America allied herself with the nations of Europe who are fighting for the world's freedom ranks with that most glorious moment when the embattled farmers of New England fired the shot heard 'round the world. America is fighting not for her own glory, but for an ideal; not for terri-

tory nor indemnity, but to make the world safe for democracy and democracy safe for the world. Proud are we of our country, not because we are the greatest of the world's republics, not because of our wide territory or our unexampled prosperity, not because of our tremendous riches or our mighty possibilities, not because of our mines and our mills, our factories and our shops, but proud are we because our country has again found her soul, because in this extremest crisis that the cause of the world's freedom has ever known, in this dark hour when the mailed fist of militarism is casting its dire shadow over a greater extent of Europe's surface than this generation has ever known, she has stepped into the breach and has answered the call that through all the ages has come to the truly chosen. I have the firm conviction that just as in the prophet's vision Israel of old was chosen and called for service, so in this latest age of the world's history this nation has been called for service, this nation has been chosen. I hear the words of the Lord speaking to America through the prophet even as He spake to ancient Israel: "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness and have taken hold of thy hand and kept thee and set thee for a covenant of the peoples, for a light of the nations; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon and those that sit in darkness out of the prison house."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